



Implementation of Strategy for Statistics, 1998-2002

Progress Report, 2001

National Statistics Board

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Preface

This is the first of the new annual reports of the National Statistics Board (NSB). It replaces the longer NSB reports of earlier years, reflecting the changed reporting structure for the Central Statistics Office (CSO). When these annual reports were instituted in the late 1980s, the CSO, as an organisation, did not report directly on its activities in the public domain, and the multi-year strategies for statistics together with their associated annual reports were the only vehicles for setting out objectives for and reporting on progress made by the CSO in improving Irish official statistics. Now under the Strategic Management Initiative (SMI) and in accordance with the *1997 Public Service Management Act*, the CSO publishes its own three-year organisational strategy¹ and also publishes annual progress reports. As indicated in the NSB annual report covering the period 1999-2000², the NSB has decided that, in the light of these recently-introduced public reporting mechanisms, it should develop a report that complements rather than replicates much of the content of the CSO annual progress report. Thus this new report is the first of the new style of NSB annual reports.



1 Statement of Strategy, 2001-2003 (Central Statistics Office, May 2001)
2 Implementation of Strategy for Statistics, 1998-2002: Progress Report, 1999-2000 (Stationery Office, Dublin, April 2002)

With respect to the CSO, the report restricts its commentary to discussing how well the CSO has achieved the specific objectives set out in the Board's *Strategy for Statistics 1998-2002*, leaving the recording of the detailed progress of the CSO to its Annual Report for 2001³. This report also addresses statistical issues beyond those covered by the CSO.

As chairperson of the National Statistics Board, I would like to thank the CSO for its responsiveness to the Board over the past year. My particular thanks are due to Marian Harkin for her contribution prior to her retirement from the Board at the beginning of 2002.

Frances Ruane
Chairperson

³ *Statement of Strategy, 2001-2003: Progress Report 2001 (Central Statistics Office, April 2002)*

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Introduction

National Statistics Board

The main function of the National Statistics Board is to guide the strategic direction of the Central Statistics Office in meeting Ireland's needs for official statistics in economic, social and other areas. The Board was established on a statutory basis on 1 November, 1994 when the *Statistics Act, 1993* came into operation. The Act, which provides the statutory basis for the collection and compilation of official statistics in Ireland, established an institutional structure consisting of the Central Statistics Office, the post of Director General of the Central Statistics Office, and the National Statistics Board. The National Statistics Board (NSB) oversees the development and implementation of its statistical strategy by the CSO, which is the primary provider of statistical information in Ireland. The CSO was established in 1949 and 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.

Section 19 of the Act states that the function of the Board, in guiding the strategic direction of the CSO 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.

The main way in which the Board seeks to progress the development of Irish official statistics is through a series of five-year strategies, which establish priorities for the CSO. Where the CSO identifies the achievement of these priorities as requiring additional resources, the Board assesses these resource requirements and prioritises them. In this report we review progress by the CSO in achieving the targets set out in the *Strategy for Statistics, 1998-2002* and report on the work of the Board during 2001. This report presents the Board's views on the extent to which the CSO has succeeded in meeting the strategic objectives and targets set for it in the current strategy and also on the issues which the Board sees Ireland facing in terms of developing a statistical infrastructure that supports our economic and social development. The membership of the Board during 2001 is given in Appendix 2.

The Board is conscious of the need to ensure that official statistics for Ireland capture the full extent of economic and social change. With regard to economic change, it is essential that we understand how increased international integration and more rapid technological change are impacting on all areas of the economy. Such data are vital for Ireland, as an economy that has grown exceptionally rapidly in the past decade and whose growth is associated with key aspects of what is referred to as the "new economy". With regard to social change, the Board is aware both of the need to measure the rapid changes that are taking place in our society in recent times, and of increased demands for social statistics to underpin the development of social policy in Ireland, especially in the context of social partnership. The importance of developing our statistical infrastructure is further emphasised by concerns at EU level to have the range and depth of statistics that can address wider economic, social and environmental issues. These concerns are reflected in new demands on Ireland to extend and deepen the coverage of official statistics. Many important developments have taken place since the Board prepared its current strategy and they will feature strongly in the next strategy, which is being prepared during 2002.

2

Board's Strategy for Statistics 1998-2002

As noted earlier, the Board has hitherto operated on the basis of five-year Strategic Plans. A period of five years was originally chosen to allow for the cyclical nature of the CSO's activities. In particular, the Census of Population and the Household Budget Survey necessitate very large year-to-year variations in the CSO's staffing and expenditure levels. In preparing its next strategy, the Board will review this five-year timeframe in the context where the CSO, in line with other government organisations, operates on a three-year planning timeframe.

Strategy for Statistics 1998-2002

The present *Strategy for Statistics* covers the period 1998-2002⁴. 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 economic and monetary union. Progress by the CSO in implementing the strategic plans has been assessed in a series of annual or biennial Board reports. The most recent of these relates to 1999-2000⁵.

In essence, the main thrusts of the Strategy were:

- ◆ to provide statistics of the high quality required for making and assessing policy
- ◆ to fill gaps in the underdeveloped area of social statistics
- ◆ to improve the coordination of the statistics being produced by Government Departments and agencies

⁴ *Strategy for Statistics, 1998-2002* (Stationery Office, Dublin; September 1998; Pn. 5990)

⁵ *Implementation of Strategy for Statistics, 1998-2002; Progress Report, 1999-2000* (Stationery Office, Dublin; April 2002)

- ◆ to ensure that the statistics produced are as accessible and as widely available as possible to contribute to their widest possible use
- ◆ to minimise the reporting burden placed on respondents.

The Strategy identified specific objectives under five headings:

- ◆ Macroeconomic Statistics
- ◆ Demographic and Social Statistics
- ◆ Business Statistics
- ◆ Other Statistical Aspects
- ◆ CSO Organisational Developments.

The first three headings cover the three key statistical areas. The fourth heading covers the interface between the CSO, data providers (both business entities and other government bodies) and users. The fifth heading recognises that new statistical developments and improvements in the quality and timeliness of statistics take place within an organisational context and it deals with the strategic organisational issues impacting on the CSO. In the next chapter, progress by the CSO during 2001 on meeting agreed objectives under each of the five headings is outlined, together with the Board's view on the extent of progress achieved.

3

Progress on the Board's 1998-2002 Strategy

Before considering the extent of progress during 2001 on the objectives set out in the Strategy, the context for these objectives is discussed in the light of the essential thrusts of the Strategy as set out in Chapter 2.

High-quality statistics

Central to the role of any national statistical institute, such as the CSO, is the provision of statistics of the high quality required for making and assessing policy. At this juncture, reflecting our membership of the EU and our adoption of the euro, the priorities for the development of economic statistics have been set largely by the EU statistical office (Eurostat) and by European Central Bank (ECB) requirements, with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) also playing a role. While the priorities in the international statistical agenda do not coincide exactly with those of individual countries, in practice most of the data that Ireland must produce to meet international requirements would be needed for domestic policy purposes. These international organisations establish statistical standards (in terms of methodology and timeliness) that the CSO must meet on Ireland's behalf. Furthermore, the organisations operate a "name and shame" policy by publishing the names of countries that fail to meet the required standards. Thus there is continuing pressure on Ireland and on the CSO to achieve these ever-rising standards, and this process is set to continue as the complexity of economic transactions increases. The burden is especially acute for Ireland, both because of the complexity of the economy and because it does not enjoy the economies of scale in data collection enjoyed by larger economies.

Social Statistics

Because of the budgetary constraints operating in Ireland over the 1980s, the priority for developments in statistics focused on economic statistics. In the mid-1990s, when the budgetary position improved, some additional funding was made available to the CSO to enhance the range and quality of social statistics. However, those resources only allowed development of social statistics on an incremental basis, insufficient, in the Board's view, to address the needs of social partnership, the growing complexity of our society, and the associated increasing requirements for social statistics in a policy context. The Board has formally recognised that a comprehensive long-term strategy is needed to develop the social statistics, which Ireland now requires. This issue will be addressed in detail in the Board's next strategy document and the first steps in this process are described in section 4.2.

Coordination of Statistics

Under the *Statistics Act, 1993* the CSO is identified as having a role to play in the development of national statistics beyond those which it may itself collect and collate. While the CSO is always available to advise departments and agencies on the development of their particular statistics, requests for such advice have not been widely forthcoming and the CSO has not been strongly proactive in this respect. A growing appreciation of the interdependency of discrete policies in promoting national well-being, and the perceived merits of a stronger evidential basis for policy-making, are focusing increased attention on the need for data coordination and integration. In this context it is important that the CSO develop a partnership with government departments and agencies in the collection and dissemination of newly developing statistical areas (e.g. environment, new economy). As in the case of social statistics, the Board recognises that this desirable development will not occur without a coordinated national approach and will seek to address this issue in its next strategy.

Wide use of statistics

When a country has invested in a good statistical system, it is imperative that such statistics are used as widely as possible, in particular to inform and evaluate policy. Many factors affect the use of statistics, the most important of which, from the CSO's perspective, lies in ensuring that its statistics are relevant, comprehensible and accessible to those who need to use them. The customer focus adopted by the CSO (discussed further under Section 3.5.3) has led to significant improvements, such as the design and presentation of data in CSO publications, the

development of the CSO website, and the production of data series on diskettes. The Board is aware that, while the CSO's customer base is expanding, the extent to which data are used may be constrained by the ability of potential users to get maximum value from the statistics produced. In preparing its next strategy the Board will seek to determine what role it may be able to play in enhancing the value obtained from statistics, especially in the public sector.

Burden of statistics

The increased demand for statistics generates increased burdens for those who must supply data to the CSO. While these burdens are inevitable, the Board has encouraged the CSO to seek to minimise them to the greatest extent possible. The use of the "Process Model" to generating enterprise statistics (see Section 3.5.4) assists in reducing such burdens. Other improvements (such as the design of the census form and the use of laptop computers for the Quarterly National Household Survey) have reduced the burden on individuals. A further potential source for reducing burdens is through the greater use of administrative data and this is an issue that the Board will also address in its next strategy.

The remainder of this Chapter examines progress by the CSO on specific targets set in the *Strategy 1998-2002* under each of the five headings listed in Chapter 2:

1. Macroeconomic Statistics
2. Demographic and Social Statistics
3. Business Statistics
4. Other Statistical Aspects
5. CSO Organisational Developments.

3.1 Macroeconomic Statistics

In terms of the thrusts of the strategy, the key issue for macroeconomic statistics has been improvements in quality. International developments, and particularly increased economic and monetary integration in Europe, led to the identification of specific improvements in Irish macroeconomic statistics so that they could meet ECB, EU and IMF standards in terms of quality and timeliness.

3.1.1 *The compilation of the extensive additional Balance of Payments detail required, beginning in 1999, to meet the needs of the European Central Bank*

This has now been achieved following the introduction of a new enhanced collection and compilation system to give a much more comprehensive picture of Ireland's transactions with the rest of the world. A major development programme was initiated in 1996, and implemented in 1998, to provide the level of detail needed by the European Central Bank for euro-related monitoring. At national level, a new and more detailed presentation of the series was introduced in May 2000. A new integrated processing system, installed during 2001, will help to improve the quality and timeliness of Balance of Payments results.

3.1.2 *The publication of Quarterly National Accounts beginning in 1999*

Quarterly National Accounts were introduced in November 1999. Initially these were produced some eight months after the end of the relevant quarter. The average time-lag for producing the 2001 quarterly accounts was five months, with the results for the fourth quarter of 2001 being published four months after that quarter's end. This is the current statutory guideline for EU purposes but a new and challenging deadline of seventy days has been set in the European Monetary Union Action Plan for statistics.

3.1.3 *The improvement in the quality of the constant price estimates in the National Accounts in the context of the Stability and Growth Pact*

A 1998 Commission Decision (98/715/CE) set new standards for the compilation of output volumes to ensure uniform measurement, especially for difficult areas such as non-market health and education. Preparatory work has been undertaken on the development of new methodologies in the non-market services area with a view to introducing, over time, methods that directly measure outputs rather than inputs.

3.1.4 The publication of the Balance of Payments statistics within 12 weeks for the first quarter of 1999

Results for the first quarter of 1999 were published in 13 weeks after the end of that quarter. That is now considered the earliest achievable publication target. Since 1999, some delays have been encountered due to the installation of the new, more detailed, processing system referred to in Section 3.1.1. As a result, the average time-lag for the 2001 quarterly Balance of Payments statements was 16 weeks but it is planned to attain the three months target again during 2002.

3.1.5 The publication of detailed External Trade statistics within 14 weeks (global estimates in 10 weeks) by 2000

The year 2000 targets have been achieved since the February 2001 releases and the average delay was 13 weeks (9 weeks for global estimates).

3.1.6 The continued development of the EU Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices (HICP) in collaboration with Eurostat and other member states

The rebased CPI to base December 2001 as 100 was introduced in early 2002, and incorporated a number of methodological improvements to the index as well as a closer alignment with the methodology recommended for the HICP.

3.1.7 The 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

The rebasing was achieved on target with the release of the January 2002 index.

Board's Comment

The Board is pleased with these developments in macroeconomic statistics, and in particular with the improvements in quality that have been achieved. The Board is aware of the added complexity involved in collecting macroeconomic statistics that now cover a more diverse range of activities, including the Irish Financial Services Centre. The improvements reflect commendable efforts by existing staff to grapple with the methodological issues raised by these new activities, as well as the increased resources made available to the CSO specifically to improve the quality of these data. The Board notes that timeliness targets have proved difficult to meet in some areas and recognises that further work is required

in a range of “new economy” areas. In particular, there is a need to develop price indices that can capture correctly the volume of imports and exports in areas where technological progress has been rapid.

3.2 Social and Demographic Statistics

In terms of the thrusts of the 1998-2002 strategy, the development of a social statistics strategy was of major importance given lacunae in, and lack of integration of, these statistics for Ireland. The key focus of the Strategy was to begin the process of gradually incorporating “social” modules in the Quarterly National Household Survey.

3.2.1 The operational consolidation of the Quarterly National Household Survey by 1999 so that its full potential is realised as an invaluable source of information on labour market and social issues

Since the end of 1999, all core quarterly labour force data are being published within three months of the completion of fieldwork. A process has been established to identify priority topics for inclusion in the QNHS, and two modules on social topics of national interest (health, and the length and pattern of working time) were undertaken in 2001. Technical developments related to the further development and improvement of the survey processes are being advanced in tandem with the implementation of the CSO’s IT Strategy.

3.2.2 The completion of a comprehensive review of the presentation and coherence of labour market statistics in 1999 once the QNHS results are on stream

This review is ongoing in consultation with the Labour Market Statistics Liaison Group. The consolidation of the monthly Live Register releases is one notable output from this process while the content of the quarterly QNHS has also been expanded to meet user needs.

3.2.3 The conduct of a Household Budget Survey (HBS) in 1999-2000

The HBS was conducted as planned between mid-1999 and mid-2000 and the main results were published in October 2001.

3.2.4 *The introduction of administrative procedures for the compilation of statistics on divorce to an international standard*

Little progress can be made in achieving this objective until a registry of divorces is established as part of the modernisation of the civil registration system. This should facilitate the compilation of the necessary statistics in due course.

3.2.5 *The 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*

A comprehensive consultation and pilot testing process was undertaken in 1999 prior to the Government deciding on the content of the Census questionnaire. In the event, the Census was postponed until April 2002. A major contract was signed with an international consortium to develop an integrated system for the processing of the census returns using scanning and recognition technologies. Increased use will also be made of electronic dissemination in releasing the results of Census 2002.

Board's Comment

The Board is pleased that the labour force data in the QNHS are now consistently available within three months of the completion of field work. It is aware that there is some need to develop further the content of existing publications, and that this need is being addressed by the Labour Market Statistics Liaison Group. The value of the quarterly series, which makes heavy demands on CSO resources, will be further enhanced by the increased use of microdata from the survey which the CSO has made available through the Irish Social Services Data Archive (ISSDA) based at University College Dublin since December 2001.

The Board is particularly pleased that the CSO is now resourced, and has demonstrated its capacity, to develop and process speedily the social modules. In the future, all microdata will be “cleaned” for deposit in the ISSDA, where they should be of value to researchers working in key policy areas. The Board also welcomes the transparent policy now in place for selecting modules in a manner that ensures that they contribute systematically to developing the social statistics infrastructure. While the QNHS is a very powerful survey, it is already close to its potential in what it can deliver annually in terms of survey questions on social issues.

The Board wishes to recognise the professional manner in which the CSO has handled the organisational complexities associated

with the delay in the Census originally scheduled for 2001. The availability of quarterly data from the QNHS has helped to overcome some of the data shortfalls due to the delay in the Census, and in a time of rapid change, it has proved to be an important statistical resource. The Board continues to be concerned by the slow progress in establishing the new civil registration system, and the negative consequences for social and demographic statistics arising from the quality of data being recorded.

Overall, while it is clear that considerable progress is being made under the present Strategy, the Board is of the view that a comprehensive strategy is required for the development of social statistics to provide an adequate data infrastructure to support decision-making on social policy issues. This is discussed further in Chapters 4 and 5.

3.3 Business Statistics

In terms of the 1998-2002 strategy, the issues in the Business Statistics areas relate primarily to improving timeliness and to filling the gaps in data on the services sector. This sector has accounted for a very large proportion of the growth in employment in Ireland over the past decade and is an area on which we have had, historically, relatively limited statistical coverage. A further issue for policy purposes is the need to provide data at NUTS 2 regional levels for Ireland.

3.3.1 The implementation of the new EU structural business statistics and short-term statistics regulations (Council Regulations 58/97 and 1165/98 respectively) with priority on the expansion in the range of statistics available for the Services sector

The more detailed requirements for statistics on services set out in the structural business statistics regulation have been met by the Annual Services Inquiry. Statistics at a NUTS 2 regional level are being incorporated in the 1999 Inquiry results and the survey sample size was increased in 2001 to improve sectoral coverage.

Considerable progress has been made in implementing the short-term statistics regulation and the associated improvements arising from the EMU Action Plan and the IMF data dissemination standards. The main timeliness targets for short-term business statistics were met in 2001, with monthly figures on industrial production available within two months and quarterly data on industrial earnings published within three months. A new series on orders in industry is being planned for introduction in 2002.

3.3.2 *The expansion of short-term earnings series to cover all sectors of the economy*

An Earnings Statistics Liaison Group was set up in 2001, to assist the CSO in developing a quarterly survey of earnings and labour costs. This new survey will be designed to measure the level of earnings and to calculate a quarterly labour cost index. It is planned that this new survey will be phased in on a sectoral basis, starting in 2002. The survey will meet national and EU requirements, including those set out in a draft regulation concerning a quarterly labour cost index, which is at an advanced stage of discussion at EU Council level.

3.3.3 *The improved timeliness of business statistics*

There have been considerable improvements in the timeliness of short-term industrial indicators. An early global estimate of industrial production is now available within 6 weeks of the reference month. A more detailed sectoral breakdown is published two weeks later. Industrial earnings statistics now meet the International Monetary Fund Special Data Dissemination Standards requirements, with results available within three months of the reference quarter.

On the other hand, the timeliness of some annual publications has deteriorated owing to the need to modify survey systems to meet new requirements. The time lost is now being regained, with the Annual Services Inquiry report for 2000 set to be published in August 2002 – a time-lag of 20 months versus a target of 18 months. The timeliness of the annual PRODCOM report (which contains a detailed breakdown of industrial products) and of the Census of Industrial Production will improve as the new process approach towards the collection and analysis of industrial statistics is embedded.

3.3.4 *The conduct of a Census of Agriculture in 2000 or 2001*

The June 2000 Census of Agriculture was the first such census to be carried out by post in Ireland. While progress on the census was initially delayed due to difficulties with farm registers and the slow response by many farmers, the main report from the Census of Agriculture is now expected to be published in August 2002.

Board's Comment

The Board is pleased that the CSO is finally reaching a position where it can make progress on two very important areas where

statistical gaps have been acute, namely, services and labour markets (earnings and labour costs). As the share of services, many of which are now internationally traded and high value-added sectors, increases in the economy it is vital that changes in these areas are monitored. Arguably the statistical resources available are still under-weighted towards services and manufacturing, and additional resources are a priority for services in particular.

The Board is aware that there were considerable delays in the CSO in implementing the new IT strategy, with the associated shift from a product to a process approach in the production of business statistics. These delays are highly regrettable because of the potential of this new system to increase the productivity of the CSO, to improve the timeliness and quality of data, and to reduce the burden on businesses. The Board is pleased to see that progress is now being made and is hopeful that the loss in timeliness in some existing series will be reversed in the coming year.

3.4 Other Statistical Aspects

This Section examines a number of statistical areas where the Board identified specific actions.

3.4.1 A more active CSO role in improving environmental statistics in co-operation with the relevant Government Departments and agencies

A second set of Pilot Environmental Accounts was compiled by the Economic and Social Research Institute and published by the CSO in July 2001. This report drew on background material from a range of bodies. The CSO participated in subgroups under the aegis of the National Climate Change Strategy implementation group to help improve data availability and quality.

3.4.2 Collaboration by the CSO with relevant Departments and agencies in the publication of a more comprehensive and coherent body of energy statistics

The CSO and the Irish Energy Centre (subsequently renamed Sustainable Energy Ireland) established a joint Energy Statistics Co-Ordinating Group in early 2002. The remit of the group is to examine the requirements for data on energy consumption and to help to develop new and existing statistical sources in this respect in relation to industry, services, transport, agriculture and the household sector.

3.4.3 *Continued liaison with Forfás on R&D and innovation statistics*

The CSO has continued to participate actively in the Fios Advisory Committee on Science and Technology Indicators, chaired by Forfás, which has statutory responsibility for producing Ireland's science and technology statistics.

3.4.4 *Continued priority on minimising the statistical reporting burden on businesses, especially SMEs*

Although the Office has previously offered to accept company management accounts, in lieu of monthly production and turnover returns, in an effort to reduce the response burden on small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), there has been a very low take-up of this offer. The CSO is continuing to develop secure web-based methodologies for the return of statistical data from company records. It is also developing its business register to help improve the measurement of the level of response burden on small businesses.

3.4.5 *The establishment of user liaison groups for the main statistical subject matter areas by the end of 1998*

User Liaison Groups have been established in the following areas:

- ◆ Agriculture statistics
- ◆ Census of Population
- ◆ Earnings statistics
- ◆ Labour Market statistics
- ◆ Macroeconomic statistics, including external trade and prices

Memberships of these committees and the extent to which they have met are listed in Appendix 3. In addition, the CSO has convened advisory groups to develop social modules in the QNHS and there are standing consultative committees with a number of public bodies (Department of Finance, Office of the Revenue Commissioners, Central Bank, etc.).

3.4.6 *The finalisation of arrangements to give researchers access to anonymised Census of Population microdata*

In addition to microdata for the Quarterly National Household Survey and the Household Budget Survey, a provisional microdata file of persons from the 1996 Census of Population was lodged with the Irish Social Science Data Archive in the second half of

2001. The emphasis was on person level records as the QNHS microdata file is considered to be a comparable source for household level data. The records were anonymised by removing identifiable information and by recoding variables such as occupation and industry so as to reduce the risk of indirect identification to a negligible level. A five per cent sample (181,321 persons), which may be analysed down to county level, was lodged. The experience of users in analysing the file will be taken into account in preparing a file from the 2002 census.

Board's Comment

The Board is pleased to see the CSO develop further its role in relation to energy and environment statistics as set out in Sections 3.4.1 and 3.4.2. In the context of developing strategies for sustainable development, a sound statistical base is essential. In the case of the Research and Development (R&D) and Innovation data collected by Forfás, were the CSO to access these Forfás data files; it would enhance its understanding of those sections of the enterprise sector that are science and technology driven.

The Board welcomes the continuing emphasis in the CSO on minimising the burden of supplying statistical data on SMEs and is pleased to see that the development agencies which survey these firms are now taking the potential costs of over-surveying into account and are rationalising their surveys. The Board is disappointed that so little use has been made of the option to firms of submitting company management accounts in lieu of completing questionnaires, and encourages the CSO to continue to pursue this approach in the long-term interests of reducing burdens.

The Board places great emphasis on the importance of the CSO's links with the producers and users of its data. For this reason it continues to encourage regular meetings of Liaison Groups in all the key statistical areas. The Board is aware that the levels of activity in these Liaison groups differs widely, with the most active being the Labour Market Liaison Group, which has helped steer developments in the QNHS and in the consolidation of the Live Register releases. The Board is considering how it might play a role in fostering the development of such groups in the future.

It has been hoped for some time that users of CSO microdata could be facilitated by the establishment of the Irish Social Science Data Archive. Unfortunately delays in the opening of the Archive have meant that data that had been prepared by the CSO for researchers for some time, only became accessible at the end of 2001. The

Board hopes that resources will be available to promote the development of this archive and put it on a firm financial footing. It is important that other survey material be located there, to maximise use of microdata by policy-makers and qualified researchers, thereby increasing the quality of empirical social research in Ireland.

3.5 CSO Organisational Developments

A key to improving the quality of official statistics lies in the efficiency of the CSO. This is recognised in the Board's emphasis on the importance of organisational developments in the CSO.

3.5.1 *The full implementation of the Government's Strategic Management Initiative (SMI) modernisation programme in the CSO*

The CSO's third *Statement of Strategy 2001-2003* was published in May 2001. The Strategy is being implemented through Local Business Programmes (LBPs) and Divisional Action Programmes (DAPs). The LBPs specify objectives, targets, timetables, and appropriate performance indicators. The LBPs form the basis for implementation of the Performance Management and Development System for all staff. Progress on the implementation of these LBPs is incorporated into Divisional Action Programmes (DAPs) for ongoing monitoring at Divisional and Directorate levels.

The CSO has published a 2001 Progress Report on its Statement of Strategy. The Partnership Committee has also played an active role in monitoring and reviewing progress on the Strategy. The Performance Indicators listed in the Strategy encompassing the high-level goals, statistical business programmes and business support programmes were submitted to the Civil Service Quality Assurance Group (CSQAG). The CSQAG has commended the CSO for the quality and range of indicators targeted and has shown particular interest in the CSO's use of project management to enhance organisational capability. The CSO submitted a report to the CSQAG in May 2002 outlining the progress made in achieving the performance indicators.

The programme for the rollout of the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) in the Office was implemented successfully in 2001. All Office-based staff have completed PMDS training and training for field staff is currently underway.

Resources amounting to 4% of payroll were devoted to training and development of staff in 2001. A training programme for management grades, to improve their managerial and leadership skills, was implemented.

3.5.2 *The development of the CSO IT function to maximise efficiencies and produce added value to statistical products*

The main developments in this area in 2001 were:

- ◆ installation of an IT infrastructure to support client server architecture
- ◆ installation of Lotus Notes groupware and the leverage of developments in other National Statistical Institutes (NSI), in particular a survey processing template
- ◆ the installation of a classification server
- ◆ the use of business lead project teams to force the alignment of IT with business needs
- ◆ the availability of time series on the CSO web site for downloading – the EireStat Spreadsheet Service.

3.5.3 *The implementation of the CSO's Customer Service Plan*

Much has been achieved on the customer service front during the year. With regard to the external customer, the achievements for this year include:

- ◆ a significant improvement in the timeliness of our Quarterly National Accounts and External Trade statistics
- ◆ increased consultation with CSO customers
- ◆ the publication of a new style statistical yearbook
- ◆ placing of anonymised microdata from the QNHS, and the 1996 Census of Population with the Irish Social Science Data Archive
- ◆ improvements in dissemination practices particularly the redesign of the website
- ◆ the establishment of a dedicated e-Technology and Business Coordination Division.

The achievements relating to internal customers include the setting up of the Project Office; the office-wide implementation of PMDS; refurbishments of office premises; the roll out of the Management Development Training Program and the provision of an e-Learning Centre. It is recognised that improvements in internal customer service lead in turn to improved external customer service.

These developments were driven by the CSO's new *Customer*

Service Plan for the period 2001-2003, which aimed to intensify the focus of all staff on responding to the needs of both internal and external customers. The Plan, which was closely integrated with the *Statement of Strategy 2001–2003*, identifies customer service as a core competency to be developed via the Performance Management and Development System. Many of the key performance indicators contained in the Statement of Strategy are reflected in the new *Customer Service Plan*.

3.5.4 The implementation of the organisation changes recommended in the 1997 consultancy report commissioned by the Board

The report commissioned by the Board in 1997, and undertaken by Deloitte and Touche, recommended two main organisational change efforts. One related to the need for structural change, away from the “Product Model” and towards the “Process Model”; the second was a set of recommendations relating to the use and deployment of IT.

The “Process Model” allows a greater focus to be given to the core organisational processes in terms of management, core skills, economies of scale, and IT requirements. It also gives opportunities to minimise the response burden. Elements of the model are in place in a number of areas in the office. An important advance in this context occurred during 2001 when the monthly industrial production survey, the annual PRODCOM survey, and the annual Census of Industrial Production, which were previously managed separately, were reorganised in a more coordinated way. The deepening of this approach will also assist in giving a greater focus on analysis.

The report made a number of recommendations relating to the better planning and use of IT. All of the recommendations have been addressed and a number of them have been achieved. An effective business register system has been put in place – although work remains to be done to improve the quality of the information on the register. As is described elsewhere, an IT Strategy was developed and the first phase has been very successfully implemented. The Office is going to tender in mid-2002 to implement the final phase (which is likely to take up to 2006 to complete).

Board's Comment

The Board commends the very considerable progress made by the CSO in strengthening its organisational base. The full extent of these developments is set out in the CSO's annual report. The CSO is among the more progressive departments in the public service in terms of adopting the various policies associated with SMI and the Board sees this progress as a key element in its ability to provide statistics of quality at a cost acceptable to the Exchequer. When combined with the decision to introduce significant changes in the methods of handling business statistics, which resulted from a major review of the CSO commissioned ahead of the preparation of the 1998-2002 Strategy, the roll-out of SMI has placed a significant burden on the Office, which was not helped by delays in the adoption of a new IT strategy. By the end of 2001, the CSO was in a position to take another step forward in terms of its use of technology and the Board is very supportive of the CSO seeking additional funds to promote this.

The Board has been keen to improve the customer focus of the CSO. For resource reasons and because of the developing vision for the CSO, the partial cost-recovery approach recommended by the Deloitte and Touche report has not been adopted. The Deloitte and Touche approach, dating from a period when revenue generation through sales of data series was envisaged, involved establishing a directorate within the CSO to promote customer relations and market CSO products. The approach taken by the CSO, in the context of changed technology and approach internationally, has been to embed a customer focus throughout the organisation, encouraging the maximum use of CSO data and not seeking to recoup costs through a charging system, in recognition of the "public good" nature of statistics. The embedded customer focus is commended by the Board, which recognises the favourable reception it has received from CSO customers. This issue is discussed further in Chapter 4.

4

Issues considered by the Board in 2001

The Board met on seven occasions during 2001. In this chapter the key issues discussed by the Board are addressed under eight headings:

1. National Progress Indicators
2. Social Statistics Framework
3. Emerging national and EU statistical issues
4. The interface between the CSO and its users
5. E-government and the development of the CSO Website
6. The CSO's IT Strategy
7. The CSO's use of Additional Resources
8. Future Organisational Development of the CSO.

4.1 National Progress Indicators

The Board welcomed the National Economic and Social Council report on *National Progress Indicators for Sustainable Economic, Social and Environmental Development*. This report fits in with the Board's opinion that official statistics should address the wider economic, social and environmental issues that are being raised at both national and EU levels.

4.2 Social Statistics Framework

The Board has been aware for many years of the growing need for Ireland to develop social statistics. Indeed, as noted in Chapter 2, one of the major priorities of the Board's current strategy is "to fill gaps in the underdeveloped area of social statistics". Accordingly, the Board strongly supported the CSO's request for additional resources to develop social modules in the QNHS, as well as its

decision to undertake, and thus integrate into the national statistical system, the new EU survey on income and living conditions (EU-SILC). While these surveys will help to fill many of the gaps, the Board recognised during 2001 that the demands for social statistics were expanding at such a pace that other sources would need to be developed. Furthermore, the Board was concerned that in the absence of a coherent statistical framework for social statistics, it was likely that the indicators etc. developed would not meet recognised standards and that resources would be wasted through duplication of effort and the need to reconcile statistics based on unharmonised sources.

The Board formed the view that a series of new statistical surveys would not be a cost effective or efficient way to meet all demands. Instead, it would be essential to focus on maximising the statistical potential of administrative data sources. While a wide variety of data holdings exist in government departments and agencies, they have evolved in large measure on a patchwork basis, generally as an unplanned by-product of administrative systems, rather than as a consequence of the planned design and collection of data. The data holdings are thus frequently stand-alone, compiled on the basis of disparate sources and definitions and not conducive to easy integration with other data; as a consequence, their actual value is below their potential value in terms of comprehensiveness and comparability (across countries and over time).

Development framework

Against this background, the Board concluded that the first priority for the development of social statistics is to:

- ◆ enunciate a framework for the development of social statistics
- ◆ develop a programme for the enhancement of existing data or the production of new data on the social situation
- ◆ establish a schedule for implementation of that programme of statistical development.

The Board determined that the framework should:

- ◆ focus on key aspects of social aspiration so as to be realistic in terms of statistical feasibility and resource-availability over an acceptably short time-frame (say, three years)
- ◆ ensure international comparability of measures in order to highlight Ireland's performance in relation to social objectives
- ◆ be geared towards measurement of outcomes
- ◆ secure the maximum integration of measurement across the

range of social policy issues (in particular where administrative records have a major role) by taking full advantage of opportunities to identify inter-linkages which would be of use in making social policy.

Essential in all of this is the need for improved communications between users and producers of social statistics so that all resources are used to optimal effect.

In recognition of this the Board, with the support of the Secretary Generals of the relevant government departments, proposed at the end of 2001 that a “scoping” study be conducted to:

- ◆ identify areas of existing and expected social policy statistical needs
- ◆ identify and evaluate existing sources of administrative data in terms of their comprehensiveness, comparability, coverage, timeliness, accessibility etc.

This study will provide the basis for identifying priorities for social statistics to be addressed in the context of the Board’s next strategy for statistics.

4.3 Emerging National and EU Statistical Issues

The Board addressed a range of other statistical issues during the year.

CPI is an overall measure of inflation

The Consumer Price Index was rebased (to December 2001) and in the lead-up to that rebasing the Board considered the issue of the coverage of the Index, and in particular the question of the exclusion of tobacco from the the official measure of inflation. The Board’s strong conviction is that the CPI must be seen first and foremost as an overall measure of inflation and that its coverage, therefore, must be comprehensive and in line with international standards. The Board considers that it is a matter for users to decide whether the overall index or an alternative sub-index (e.g. excluding tobacco) should be used for specific purposes.

The Report of the Commission on Public Service Pensions proposes that public service pensions be adjusted on a six-monthly basis in accordance with changes in a Public Sector Earnings Index

to be published by the CSO. Should this proposal be accepted, substantial development work will be required to put an appropriate index in place. This is one of the issues that will be considered as a high priority by the Earnings Statistics Liaison Group.

On the EU front, the Board took note of proposals to develop fast EU/EMU short-term indicators based on European rather than national samples – the first effort will be to produce a fast European Retail Sales index. Information of this kind is required for a number of reasons, but particularly to support the European Central Bank in managing the euro. This work is continuing and has the potential to establish an interesting precedent in finding the correct balance in satisfying competing national and EU priorities.

The Board strongly supported a draft EU Council Regulation to introduce a new annual survey on income and living conditions (EU-SILC) from 2003. This survey will replace the Living in Ireland Survey that was carried out as part of the European Community Household Panel. While much of the preparatory discussion in relation to the EU-SILC has centred on its launch across all EU member states, it is also an essential survey that is urgently required to support national policy in Ireland on poverty and social exclusion.

4.4 The interface between the CSO and its Users

One of the thrusts of the current strategy is to encourage the widespread use of CSO statistics. This reflects the Board's view that it has a role to play in supporting the use of CSO statistics by policy makers in the public service, as a basis for policy proposals and for policy evaluation. Towards this end, it has supported the CSO's dissemination policy of providing user-friendly publications and of making the main statistical series available in electronic format. These developments are efficient both for the user and for the CSO, and should encourage more "evidence-based" policy making in Ireland.

To ensure that the CSO stays in touch with its users, the Board conducted a survey of users of CSO data in 2001. While not without some criticisms, the results were extremely favourable to the CSO when compared with a similar survey five years previously. The improved satisfaction reflected (a) more

satisfaction with methods of dissemination and (b) high quality of service from CSO personnel to specialist users. Concerns remain with timeliness and data gaps, where Ireland lags behind some other countries in terms of the details provided in certain data series. The details in this survey will feed into the Board's next Strategy.

In addition to user surveys, the Board has encouraged the CSO to develop further its liaison groups, so that it will be advised of the needs of expert data users and producers, who are also in a position to advise the CSO on data issues; see section 3.4.5. The Board concluded that it was not satisfied with the rate of development of these groups. The Board will revisit this issue again in the context of the next Strategy document.

4.5 E-government and the development of the CSO Website

The e-government agenda is an extremely important issue for the CSO, particularly because of the type of business in which the Office is involved. New opportunities will arise both in the collection and analysis of information, as well as in the wider dissemination of statistical information over the web.

The CSO website was redesigned during 2001. The most important new feature is the spreadsheet service, which made thousands of series from the CSO databank available to users in downloadable form. This feature has received favourable comment in assessments of the website. The long-term plan is to provide a comprehensive dissemination database with interactive functionality on the website.

Almost all CSO business inquiry forms are now available to download from the web. The next steps are to provide a facility whereby data can be returned to the office over the web in complete security and to make inquiry forms available for electronic transmission. This will take some time to achieve. Ultimately, the aim is to automate, where appropriate, the extraction of statistical information from business systems and return it electronically to the CSO.

The CSO has a keen interest in and is supporting the work of Reach, the Government Agency established in 2000 to assist in achieving the goal of fully integrated delivery of public services. Progress in this area will provide a range of new opportunities for efficient and economical access to both business and social data in the future.

4.6 The CSO's IT Strategy

Most of CSO's software applications (supporting about 100 surveys) are still operated from a mainframe computer platform. The office has developed an IT strategy which will move its business into a modern database environment in a number of stages.

In the first phase every member of staff has been allocated a desktop PC, and groupware (Lotus Notes) has been installed across the office. A series of corporate document databases, open to all relevant staff, has been put in place. This new environment has had a significant impact on knowledge sharing, not only across the entire organisation, but also with other statistical offices (mainly the UK, Australia and New Zealand).

A new data model has been designed and consultants were retained during 2001 to propose an implementation plan for the final phase of the strategy. Resources to progress the strategy have been allocated and the office will be going to the market in mid-2002.

4.7 The CSO's use of Additional Resources

In early 2001 additional resources (including 30 extra staff) were allocated to the office. Because of the lack of recruitment panels some of these posts remained unfilled at the end of the year. The main part of the additional resources that became available was assigned to Balance of Payments (BOP) and Financial statistics. A new processing system has been put in place for the BOP and the extra resources will contribute to maintaining the quality, range and timing of statistics at a high standard.

Resources were also assigned to carry out a Labour Costs survey, with first publication expected in mid-2002. Some additional resources were assigned to the Quarterly National Household Survey to streamline the planning for social modules, to speed up the availability of data and to facilitate the lodgment of anonymised micro-data with the Irish Social Science Data Archive. Finally, dedicated resources were also assigned to initiate and champion work in e-government, to begin working on social statistics integration, and to put in place a Quality Assurance function.

The Board is satisfied with the additional output achieved through the allocation and use of these additional resources.

4.8 Future Organisational Development of the CSO

The Board invited the incoming CSO Director General, Donal Garvey, to present to the Board his vision for the organisation. In this context he was also asked to provide an account of progress which had been made and issues that remained outstanding from the consultancy study which had been commissioned by the Board from Deloitte and Touche in advance of the preparation of the *Strategy for Statistics, 1998-2002*.

The Board is satisfied that very considerable progress has been made in implementing change and that outstanding issues are being addressed. The Board recognises that operating within a civil service environment places some constraints on the CSO in terms of its flexibility. However, it considers that the existing and potential benefits to the Office from being part of the civil service in terms of ability to successfully develop Ireland's statistical infrastructure far outweigh those constraints.

Various elements in the Director General's Vision document will feed into the preparation of the next National Statistics Board's *Strategy for Statistics*, which is being prepared during 2002.

5

Board Plans for 2002

The major effort of the NSB during 2002 is being directed towards developing its next *Strategy for Statistics*. The Board will consider the length of this next strategy in the context of the new reporting framework for the CSO – it is possible that this strategy will cover six rather than five years, in order to be more consistent with the CSO. This process involves the Board in a review of the CSO, which includes detailed discussions with its directors on emerging statistical issues. In the case of previous Board Strategies, the process has involved the Board agreeing with the CSO the priorities for statistical developments in Ireland. This has led to the Board concentrating on the statistics that are produced by the CSO and not looking at the broader framework for statistics in Ireland.

The Board is very conscious of the growing importance of statistics to the development of economic and social policy in Ireland, including statistics at a sub-national level as Ireland develops its first spatial strategy. In this context in the preparation of the next strategy, the Board is reviewing a broader range of key strategic issues for statistics in Ireland. This includes:

- ◆ clarifying the respective roles of the CSO and other departments and agencies in providing data for Ireland
- ◆ defining the roles of the NSB and the CSO in the promotion of the increased use of statistics for policy
- ◆ examining ways in which administrative data can be harnessed and developed to generate more, and better, policy-oriented statistics.

In the case of social statistics, if the scoping study (described in Section 4.2) proves successful, there will be issues of how to pursue the development of social statistics further and of examining whether such an approach may be used in other areas of statistics.

It is clear that Ireland's recent economic success has brought about huge changes and that these changes continue. As we develop, it behoves us to have the statistics we need to monitor such change and to underpin the policies being proposed in response to the changes that occur. In preparing its next Strategy, the National Statistics Board plans to provide to Government its broad view of how our statistics need to develop, so that the CSO and other data producing agencies may address data issues strategically and comprehensively rather than reactively and incrementally.

Appendices

Appendix

1

Publication Timeliness

The Board's 1995 Annual Report contained a table giving the timeliness (lag from end of the reference period) for statistical releases and publications issued by the CSO. This information is repeated here along with the general current timeliness level and current target to enable a comparison to be made. Information is given here only for regular surveys that are undertaken annually or more frequently.

Publication	Timeliness In 1995	Timeliness for 2001 report (at end-March 2002)	Current target (at end March 2002)
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Macroeconomic Statistics

Balance of Payments (<i>quarterly</i>)	22 weeks	21 weeks	13 weeks
Annual National Accounts			
Summary Results (<i>annual</i>)	6 months	26 weeks	26 weeks
Publication (<i>annual</i>)	6½ months	32 weeks	30 weeks
Quarterly National Accounts ¹			
(<i>quarterly</i>)	<i>n/a</i>	22 weeks	18 weeks
Regional Accounts ¹ (<i>annual</i>)	<i>n/a</i>	25 months	24 months
Household Accounts ¹ (<i>annual</i>)	<i>n/a</i>	25 months	24 months

External Trade

Release (<i>monthly</i>)			
Extra-EU	10 weeks	7 weeks	8 weeks
Total	20 weeks	12 weeks	13 weeks
Publication (<i>monthly</i>)	32 weeks	16 weeks	17 weeks

Labour Market

Live Register ²			
Statement (<i>monthly</i>)	1 week	7 days	
Flow Analysis (<i>monthly</i>)	1½ weeks	11 days	
Area Analysis (<i>monthly</i>)	2 weeks	13 days	
Analysis ¹ (<i>monthly</i>)	<i>n/a</i>	14 days	7 days
Age by Duration (<i>half-yearly</i>)	11 weeks	6 weeks	7 weeks
Industrial Disputes (<i>quarterly</i>)	17 weeks	12 weeks	12 weeks

Publication	Timeliness In 1995	Timeliness for 2001 report (at end-March 2002)	Current target (at end-March 2002)
Labour Force Survey/QNHS (quarterly)	6 months	3 months	3 months
Prices			
CPI (monthly)	4 weeks	8-18 days	8-18 days
WPI ³ (monthly)	4 weeks	24 days	7 weeks
Vital Statistics			
Release (quarterly)	24 weeks	18 weeks	20 weeks
Publication (annual)	48 months	34 months	26 months
Population/Migration Estimates (April) (annual)	6 months	4 months	5 months
Irish Babies Names ¹ (annual)	n/a	6 months	6 months
Industry			
Production (monthly)			
Index	14 weeks	7 weeks	8 weeks
Early Global Estimate ¹	n/a	6 weeks	6 weeks
Turnover (monthly)	15 weeks	8 weeks	9 weeks
Stocks ¹ (quarterly)	n/a	20 weeks	19 weeks
Capital Assets ¹ (quarterly)	n/a	20 weeks	19 weeks
Employment, Final (quarterly)	17 weeks	13 weeks	13 weeks
Earnings & Hours (quarterly)	21 weeks	13 weeks	13 weeks
CIP Release			
local unit (annual)	34 months	18 months	17 months
enterprise (annual)	41 months	18 months	17 months
early estimate ¹ (annual)	n/a	14 months	15 months
CIP publication (annual)	31 months	23 months	20 months
PRODCOM ¹ (annual)	n/a	12 months	11 months
Building			
Employment (monthly)	4 weeks	10 weeks	8 weeks
Earnings (quarterly)	24 weeks	12 weeks	18 weeks
Planning Permissions (quarterly)	16 weeks	48 weeks	43 weeks
Census (annual)	21 months	29 months	28 months

Publication	Timeliness In 1995	Timeliness for 2001 report (at end-March 2002)	Current target (at end-March 2002)
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Services

Financial Services			
Employment/Earnings (<i>quarterly</i>)	12 weeks	33 weeks	29 weeks
Public Sector			
Employment (<i>quarterly</i>)	17 weeks	34 weeks	29 weeks
Earnings (<i>quarterly</i>)	17 weeks	34 weeks	29 weeks
Earnings: Distribution & Services ¹ (<i>quarterly</i>)	<i>n/a</i>	18 weeks	18 weeks
Retail Sales Index			
Provisional (<i>monthly</i>)	8 weeks	8 weeks	9 weeks
Final (<i>monthly</i>)		9 weeks	9 weeks
Service Inquiries (<i>annual</i>)	34 months	27 months	20 months
Tourism & Travel (<i>quarterly</i>)	13 weeks	17 weeks	12 weeks
Tourism & Travel (<i>annual</i>)	5 months	17 weeks	16 weeks
Road Freight Inquiry (<i>annual</i>)	18 months	25 months	16 months
Statistics of Port Traffic (<i>annual</i>)	7½ months	10 months	8 months
Vehicle Licensing			
Final (<i>monthly</i>)	12 weeks	10 weeks	9 weeks
Annual (<i>annual</i>)	7 months	3 months	4 months

Agriculture

Prices			
Inputs/Outputs (<i>monthly</i>)	8 weeks	10 weeks	9 weeks
Preliminary Estimates ¹ (<i>annual</i>)	<i>n/a</i>	-34 days	-30 days
Fishery ¹ (<i>annual</i>)	<i>n/a</i>	12 months	11 months
Land Sales ¹ (<i>quarterly</i>)	<i>n/a</i>	25 weeks	26 weeks
Output, Input, Income (<i>annual</i>)			
December Estimates	-1 month	-3 weeks	-3 weeks
January Estimates	1 month	5 weeks	5 weeks
Final Estimates	7 months	10 months	6 months
June Survey ⁴ (<i>annual</i>)			
Provisional	3 months	16 weeks	16 weeks
Final	13 months	6 months	
Labour	18 months	7 months	
Crop Production (<i>annual</i>)	35 weeks	7 months	

Publication	Timeliness In 1995	Timeliness for 2001 report (at end-March 2002)	Current target (at end-March 2002)
Livestock Survey (<i>annual</i>)	2 months	9 weeks	10 weeks
Pig Survey, 1 June (<i>annual</i>)	6 weeks	5 weeks	5 weeks
Milk Statistics (<i>monthly</i>)	2 weeks	36 days	30 days
Slaughterings (<i>monthly</i>)	4 weeks	6 weeks	6 weeks
Supply Balances (<i>annual</i>)			
Meat	11 months	9 months	9 months
Milk ¹	<i>n/a</i>	8 months	8 months
Cereals ¹	<i>n/a</i>	8 months	8 months

1 not applicable: new release since 1995

2 Three Live Register releases were consolidated into one analysis with effect from March 2002

3 The disimprovement in the WPI timeliness is temporary due to the introduction of a rebased system.

4 June 2000 and 2001 final results will be based on the complete Census of Agriculture. The June 2002 Agricultural Survey results will be published with the same timeliness as in 1999.

Membership of the Board and Meetings in 2001

The Board had seven meetings in 2001.

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

Ms Mary Doyle
Assistant Secretary, Department of the Taoiseach

Mr Cathal O'Loughlin
Assistant Secretary, Department of Finance

Mr Donal Garvey
Director General, Central Statistics Office (ex officio member).

Secretary to the Board:

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

Statistics Liaison Groups

Agricultural Statistics Liaison Group

Number of Meetings in 2001: 1

Membership (at December 2001):

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

Mr Liam Connolly, Teagasc

Mr Ciaran Dolan, Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association

Mr David Eiffe, An Bord Bia

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 2001: None

With the postponement of the 2001 census, no meetings took place during 2001. The group will advise on the publication programme for the 2002 census.

Membership (at December 2001):

Ms Paula Carey, Irish Congress of Trade Unions

Professor Pat Clancy, University College Dublin

Mr David Croughan, Irish Business and Employers
Confederation

Mr Niall Crowley, Equality Authority

Mr Frank Doheny, Department of Enterprise, Trade and
Employment

Mr Tom Duffy, Department of Social, Community and Family
Affairs

Ms Mary Dunne, Department of Education and Science

Mr Liam Kenny, General Council of County Councils

Mr Hugh Magee, Department of Health and Children

Mr Eoin O'Leary, Department of the Taoiseach

Mr Phil Ryan, Department of Finance

Professor Jerry Sexton, Economic and Social Research Institute

Mr Owen Shinkwin, Dublin Transportation Office

Mr James Stone, Midland Regional Authority

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

Professor 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, CSO

Earnings Statistics Liaison Group

Number of Meetings in 2001: 1

Membership (at December 2001):

Mr Noel Cahill, National Economic and Social Council

Mr Mark Cassidy, Central Bank of Ireland

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

Mr Jim Curran, Irish Small and Medium Enterprises

Mr David Duffy, Economic and Social Research Institute

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

Mr George Hennessy, Construction Industry Federation (CIF)

Mr Aebhric McGibney, Irish Business and Employers Confederation

Mr John McGrath, FÁS

Ms Avine McNally, Small Firms Association

Mr Barra O'Murchadha, Department of Finance

Mr Manus O'Riordan, Irish Congress of Trade Unions

Ms Cliona Ryan, Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment

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

Secretary: Tony Kelleher

Labour Market Statistics Liaison Group

Number of Meetings in 2001: 2

Membership (at December 2001):

Mr Laurence Bond, National Economic and Social Forum

Mr Brian Carroll, Department of Finance

Mr Gerry Cribbin, Department of the Taoiseach

Mr Sean Halpin, Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs

Mr Colm Harmon, National University of Ireland, Dublin

Ms Noeleen Hartigan, Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed

Mr Aebhric McGibney, Irish Business and Employers Confederation

Mr John McGrath, FÁS

Ms Marie Mackle, Department of Finance

Dr Philip O'Connell, Economic and Social Research Institute

Ms AnnMarie O'Connor, National Economic and Social Council

Ms Julia O'Malley, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment

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

CSO staff: Gerry O'Hanlon, Pdraig Dalton, Nicola Tickner

Secretary: Noel Ryan, Deirdre Harte

Macroeconomic Statistics Liaison Group

Number of Meetings in 2001: None

Membership (at December 2001):

Mr David Croughan, Irish Business and Employers
Confederation (IBEC)

Professor 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 Manus O’Riordan, Services, Industrial, Professional,
Technical Union

plus representatives from

Department of the Taoiseach (formerly Mr Eoin O’Leary)

Department of Finance (formerly Mr Robert Watt)

National Economic and Social Council (formerly Mr Cathal
Guiomard)

CSO staff: Bill Keating, Mick Lucey

Secretary: Annette Hayes