

Dissemination of Information on Business Registers in the UK

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Register Outputs

- Survey frames / samples
- Web publication “Size Analysis of UK Businesses” - annual enterprise and local unit tables
- Data for compendia publications
- Data published by other government departments e.g. DTI - SME data and VAT registrations / de-registrations
- Bespoke data service

Categories of Users

- ONS surveys
- Other government departments - surveys, frames, administrative purposes
- Local authorities - planning purposes
- Eurostat
- Other ad-hoc users (business / research)

Recent Developments 1

- Demand for regional structural data
 - Regional governments
 - Central evidence-based decision making
 - Enhance survey outputs
- Neighbourhood Statistics
 - Government programme to identify and aid deprived neighbourhoods
 - Data needed at NUTS 5 level or lower

Recent Developments 2

- High demand for business demography data
 - Small Business Service
 - Support for administrative decision making
 - Eurostat
 - Business Demography Users Group

Recent Developments 3

- Tool for co-ordination of survey outputs and administrative sources
- Validation of other outputs e.g. input-output tables
- Reconciling household and business survey estimates of employment
- Link to population census

Issues 1

- Tension between survey requirements and developing analytical outputs
- Improving addresses improves small area data
- Direct register analyses require better estimates of size and classification
- Full coverage needed for surveys
- Change versus levels

Issues 2

- Quality assurance
 - Process needs to be audited
 - Quality framework in line with EU model
 - User satisfaction survey
- Quality improvement programme to support new demands
- Differential feedback from surveys and customers

Issues 3

- Access to comprehensive metadata
- ONS standards
 - Tabulation tool (SuperSTAR)
 - Web tools
- Cost - standard charging mechanisms
- Limited resources
- Secure dissemination
 - Internet, intranet, CD-ROM, paper

Confidentiality Constraints

- Disclosive microdata
 - Specified government departments for “statistical” purposes only
 - Local authorities for “planning” purposes
- Non-disclosive aggregates
 - All other public and private sector customers
- Different rules for register data?

Control of Data Release

- Legal framework
 - Several relevant legal acts
 - May allow only partial release
 - “Ministerial Direction” may be needed
- Codes of Practice
- Micro-data Release Panel
 - Reviews all requests to release micro-data from a policy point of view

The Future

- Internet dissemination is the norm
- Low-level aggregation
- User-driven tools to analyse data
- Joined-up data services within UK government
- Common standards and easier access to a wide range of data internationally

