

IDBR Review - End of Project Report

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1. Introduction

The White paper " Building Trust in Statistics" set out the framework for quality assuring National Statistics. A key component of the framework was a programme of thorough reviews of key outputs. The Interdepartmental Business Register (IDBR) Quality Review was the second such review and the first in the Commerce, Energy and Industry theme group.

The purpose of the review was to establish what users need from the IDBR. The IDBR quality review examined the main IDBR processes (i.e. those relating to updating the IDBR from external and internal sources, selecting survey samples, and quality control) to establish the effect they have on the quality of the IDBR. It also looked at making information about IDBR quality available to users.

[The IDBR Quality Review](#) was released on the National Statistics (NS) website on 18 April 2001 and its implementation plan on 12 October 2001. The report contained 29 recommendations to develop the IDBR as a key element of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) infrastructure, delivering a service to respond to increasing user demands, while minimising the burden on business. The development would be achieved by working more closely with the administrative departments, improved use of technology and by using best practices of other statistical offices. The ONS accepted all the recommendations in its initial response to the publication of the review.

The implementation project was to be completed by the end of March 2003 with all the products signed off and an end project report to be available on the NS website by end June 2003.

The aims of this project were to:

- Manage the implementation of the 29 recommendations by ensuring that all recommendations are carried out and completed within the expected timescale, to the acceptable quality standard and with the appropriate resources.
- Ensure all users of the IDBR are aware of the impact as a result of implementing the recommendations. - undertaken primarily through;
 - Reporting to and receiving feedback from the IDBR Management Committee
 - Informing the Economic Statistics divisional directors
 - Informing the IDBR User Committee
 - Informing other users via the National Statistics

There are close relationships between the IDBR review and other projects, both internal to ONS and wider, which are shown below. The figures in brackets indicate the recommendation number to which there are links.

- IDBR Review Implementation Analysis project (1,17,26)
- Comprehensive Business Directory (CBD) Project (2,3,21)
- CLAssifications MOdelling and Utilities Research (CLAMOUR) project (4)
- Annual Register Inquiry (ARI) project (5,6,8)
- Questionnaire design project (7)
- Data Analyst Scheme (DAS)/Register Information Processor Scheme (RIPS)/Investors in People (IiP) training projects (22)
- Methodology group (MG) Projects (28, 29)
- Eurostat Demography Project (29)

2. Business Benefits

There were a range of areas where changes, building on the strengths identified, could better meet customer needs. These were grouped logically within broad areas of the IDBR covering data from administrative sources, the ARI, the mechanism for updating statistical information on the IDBR, complex businesses, coverage, and quality.

3. Summary of outcomes

This project ran from April 2001 to end March 2003 with management of the project undertaken by an ONS project board.

This section explains the achievements that have been made by the project, grouped logically within the broad areas of the IDBR review recommendations that appear in chapters 4 - 12 of the review report. It provides the outcomes at a summary level with the detail of the work undertaken for each product shown in Annex A. Where there has been further progress or new information available since a specific completion report was produced, this has been added to both the summary and detailed outcomes information.

Quality measures: recommendation 1

- A new User Satisfaction Questionnaire was developed and used in January 2002.
- An Annual Quality Report was written based on the feedback received within the new User Satisfaction Questionnaire. Future Quality Reports will follow the annual update of the IDBR in July each year and distributed to the IDBR User and Management Committees.
- The Analysis Project work has concluded with an end of project evaluation report.

Administrative sources: recommendations 2,3 & 4

- Stage 1 of the Comprehensive Business Directory (CBD) work (funded by Invest to Save 1 finances) concluded in November 2001, and a final report was submitted to HM Treasury in spring 2002.
- Stage 2 work, which was solely funded by ONS, concluded in September 2002 with an end of project report produced. The primary aim for stage 2 was to develop the data warehouse hub structure to enable direct and secure access of administrative data via

the Government Gateway approach or suitable alternative. Each of the three partner departments have agreed in principle to progress from the current method of data delivery to using the Government Secure Intranet (GSI) for secure direct transfers.

- Companies House and Inland Revenue are using CD-ROM data delivery prior to investigation into electronic delivery in the longer term.
- The CBD steering group, renamed the Business Data Sharing group, continues to meet quarterly with a series of bilateral meetings being held regularly between ONS and each of the other departments to consider these issues.
- HMCE changes to the VAT group processing system were transferred electronically to the ONS in March 2002 and the frequency of data exchange changed from monthly to daily delivery.
- Consideration of the best ways for direct electronic transfer of data from the administrative departments to ONS Newport were taken forward within the CBD project (see recommendation 2).
- Legal issues were addressed in stage 1 of the CBD project and are covered in its report to HM Treasury.
- HMCE adopted the new SIC 2003 classifications in line with the Operation 2002 project and provided ONS with classifications in line with the new coding in May 2002.
- CH adopted the SIC 2003 classification from January 2003 but have a number of companies outstanding who will not have their classifications updated until they file their next return.
- All of the CLAMOUR reports have been completed and information placed on the NS website. The ONS Statistical Infrastructure Development Project (SIDP) has taken over responsibility for developing the strategy for standardising classification systems and the CLAMOUR work will feed into this.

Annual register inquiry: recommendations 5 - 8

- Agreement on the extra compliance for additional ARI forms has been given;
- The ARI inquiry is now despatched twice a year (August and November) and sample design changes have been introduced:
 - the employment cut-off has been reduced from 100 to 50,
 - for the 10-49 employment band the sample has been increased to 1 in 4
 - An extra cell has been included in the November selection to include further enterprises with conflicting auxiliary information.
- Implementation of the new response chasing strategy is now complete with the result that response rates have been improved as a result of the action taken.
- A specific enforcement strategy was developed and implemented with large contributors with a poor response record referred to the Enforcement Unit.
- ONS Methodology Group are re-designing the ARI form as the first sub-project within their Questionnaire Re-design Project.
- Use of the electronic (floppy disk) method of data capture for ARI data was promoted to all larger contributors.

Survey sources: recommendations 9 - 11

- The priorities for updating auxiliary information have been amended, with the profiling team retaining the highest priority for the cases they have profiled.
- An inertia rule was implemented for the PRODCOM inquiry in January 2003 and will be evaluated in May 2003 before the file is taken on to the database.
- An upgraded (32-bit) software version of the Precision Data Coder (PDC) package was rolled out in April 2002. The ONS Statistical Infrastructure Development Project has taken over responsibility for developing the strategy for standardising classification systems.
- PDC training through a new RIPS/ARI module commenced in August 2002. The RIPS training gained Oxford, Cambridge and Royal Society of Arts Examinations (OCR) accreditation in April 2003.

Complex businesses: recommendations 12 - 15

- The profiling strategy and specification has been incorporated into the Business Plan and improved management functions have been specified for implementation under the ONS re-engineering project.
- A review of the workplan on an annual basis will be done as part of the annual planning round in November/December each year to identify those cases that are a priority for profiling.
- The Business Profiling plan for 2003/2004 and a profiling checklist has been produced.
- A Structures Group set up within ONS looked at issues surrounding the structures of complex businesses with a key output being guidance literature for consistent procedures, including a 'Frequently Asked Questions' section.
- A report on structures was presented to the IDBR User Committee and the recommendations agreed. An implementation timetable is being produced.
- The terms of reference of the IDBR management committee are being amended to cover the cross-departmental profiling issues.
- A project board has been established to review and identify the existing procedures and maintenance routines for inquiry specific information. Their recommendations will feed into the IDBR re-engineering project.

Coverage: recommendations 16 & 17

- The IDBR Management Committee has revised their terms of reference to specifically include the management of recommendation 16.
- ONS and DTI have produced a paper IDBRMC(02)20 for the IDBR Management Committee "Undercoverage due to Non-registration of Small Businesses" which recommends a number of changes to procedures.
- ARI data has been used to establish the proportion of units/employment missing from the register as a result of the treatment of potentially duplicate units. This measure is presented within the BRU Annual Quality and Analysis Monthly Reports.

Online processes and validation of input data: recommendations 18 & 19

- An IDBR Audit Review and final report has been produced and the recommendations implemented, except where a programming change was required, when requests for change have been made.
- Audit of the existing validation checks was undertaken and the results passed to ONS Methodology Group who recommended introduction of additional validation controls.

Management and communication with users: recommendations 20 - 27

- The Register Information Processors Scheme (RIPS) was launched in 2002, and has been accredited by OCR to provide a focused and specific training scheme for Business Register Unit (BRU).
- Two four-month secondments into the business profiling team have taken place, with further secondments planned subject to available funding.
- The IDBR Management Committee has revised its terms of reference to specifically include the management of recommendation 21.
- The short-term solution for secure IDBR transmission is in place utilising Cryptocard, whilst for small-scale transfers of data the GSI can be used.
- The BRU section of the ONS internal Standards and Guidance database has been launched, which documents BRU working procedures.
- The NS Website has been updated to provide a wide range of business register documentation. (<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/idbr>).
- The BRU Analysis Monthly Report, developed in consultation with users, provides a summary of the main month to month changes on the register.
- Standard procedures for updating the IDBR have been set out and implemented by BRU and ARI teams. Any proposed changes to the IDBR are reported to the IDBR User Committee for approval.

Kokic/Brewer Review: recommendations 28 & 29 (Review of IDBR – Chapter 12)

- Testing is complete for EndPoint Enhancement, which was discussed and approved by the IDBR User Committee.
- This requirement links in with Eurostat work on enterprise demography. The first harmonised data collection from Member States took place during the summer of 2002, results will be available by mid 2003.

4. Future work

There are areas where there is future work to be completed or where there may be further information on progress available in the next few months. A Post Implementation Review (PIR) will be completed and available at the end of December 2003, six months after the end of project report. The PIR will be based on the future work identified in the table at Annex B - Future Work which include measuring the impact of the changes made.

Business Registers Unit
Statistical Framework Division
ONS

Annex A - Detailed Outcomes of Project:

The table below lists the recommendations. Each completion document can be accessed by using the appropriate link within the table.

This is followed by the recommendations, listed in numerical order, with their associated Completion of Project Document.

Where further information is available on request, it can be obtained by sending an Email to: virginia.lane@ons.gov.uk

| Rec. No. | Summary of Recommendation | Published priority | Link to Completion of Project Document | Status |
|----------|--|---|--|---|
| 1 | ONS should publish regularly a wide range of measures of both the level of the IDBR's quality and the change in quality over time. The existing user satisfaction questionnaire should be improved to include a wider range of questions relating to the IDBR's quality and that of the service provided by the Business Registers Unit. | 1 - High | Link | Completed |
| 2 | The development of the Comprehensive Business Directory should continue to be a priority within ONS, as a means of improving access to data from administrative sources, improving the quality of the IDBR through better matching of source data and of reducing the need to collect data directly from businesses. | 1 - High | Link | Completed |
| 3 | Building on the existing relationships with HM Customs and Excise (HMCE), Inland Revenue (IR) and Companies House (CH), ONS should: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. seek to extend the range of data supplied by the administrative departments to include, from HMCE, company numbers and previous VAT registration details and, from all administrative sources, comprehensive contact information (Priority: 1); 2. seek to improve the method and frequency of transferring data from the administrative sources (Priority: 3); 3. consider, within the scope of the current legal framework, feeding back industrial classification data to the administrative departments (Priority: 2); and 4. seek to improve the quality of industrial classification coming from administrative sources by using consistent data-collection and coding techniques, and by supporting those people who classify businesses. | 1 - High 3 - Low 2 - Medium 1 - High | Link | Completed Completed Completed |
| 4 | Quality standards for industrial classification, legal status, company number and address should be agreed and documented by ONS and the administrative departments. | 1 - High | Link | Completed |
| 5 | ONS should revise the Annual Register Inquiry sample design and selection so that it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completely enumerates enterprises with employment of 50 or more; • Includes a wider range of enterprises with conflicting auxiliary information; • Includes, every four years, enterprises with employment of 10 or more; • Includes enterprises with employment of less than 10 only to the extent that is necessary for adequate quality measurement; and | 1 - High | Link | Completed |

| | | | | |
|----|---|--------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be used to update the IDBR in an unbiased way. | | | |
| 6 | <p>In the Annual Register Inquiry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The response rate should be improved by following up non-response more effectively. The response rate for the largest enterprises should be 100 per cent. The general procedures used by ONS to ensure compliance with the Statistics of Trade Act 1947 should be applied rigorously to the Annual Register Inquiry. | 2 - Medium 2 - Medium | Link | Completed Completed |
| 7 | Questionnaire design for the Annual Register Inquiry should be given priority within ONS's proposed business-survey questionnaire design project. Among the particular topics that need to be addressed are omission of local units; delineation of business units; feedback of known industrial classification information; and efficient collection of business description information. | 1 - High | Link | Completed |
| 8 | ONS should continue to extend the present electronic data-collection arrangements for the Annual Register Inquiry. | 2 - Medium | Link | Completed |
| 9 | The Annual Register Inquiry, Business Profiling Team and the administrative sources should have highest priority for updating IDBR auxiliary information. In the case of industrial classification, this depends on improvements to the current level of quality of information from those sources. Other sources should be used by the Business Registers Unit to resolve uncertainty and ambiguity. | 1 - High | Link | Completed |
| 10 | The agreed electronic tool should be used to aid classifying business descriptions. All staff members should feed back information on deficiencies to those controlling the system to improve the quality of the coding tool. The use of expertise from outside ONS (for example, industry groups) should be considered as a way of improving coding quality. ONS should review the Precision Data Coder alongside other similar products to ensure that the most effective tool for the job is used. | 2 - Medium | Link | Completed |
| 11 | The rules for updating the industrial classification and employment variables, set up to maintain stability of sample membership for short-period inquiries, should be reviewed to see if they could better accommodate register maintenance requirements and should be applied rigorously. | Low | Link | Completed |
| 12 | A business profiling strategy should be agreed based on two objective measures: the level of secondary activity; and the impact on survey estimates and analyses. A solution should be developed to bring profiling and ARI operations together for the largest businesses. A trigger mechanism should be established for sub-annual profiling of the most complex enterprises. | 1 - High | Link | Completed |
| 13 | The Business Profiling Team (BPT) should initially establish the correct structures of the businesses at the desk. For complex businesses, an agreed programme of profiling visits should be put in place, and this should be made available to survey managers in advance. The BPT should ensure that data collection and survey results managers are informed, in advance, of its updates to business structures on the IDBR. | 3 - Low | Link | Completed |
| 14 | To reduce the burden on business and improve coherence across National Statistics, ONS should explore with other government departments opportunities, within the requirements for maintaining data confidentiality, to co-ordinate the collection of data relating to the structure of complex enterprises. | 3 - Low | Link | Completed |
| 15 | A detailed review of the requirements for survey-specific reporting arrangements should be carried out with the aim of standardising reporting arrangements for all surveys. Where non-standard | 2 - Medium | Link | Completed |

| | | | | |
|----|---|------------|----------------------|-----------|
| | arrangements are necessary, the procedures for managing them should be simplified. | | | |
| 16 | ONS should work with the Department of Trade and Industry to improve the method of estimating the under-coverage that arises from businesses not required to register with HM Customs and Excise and Inland Revenue. | 3 - Low | Link | Completed |
| 17 | ONS should measure any bias that may arise because of the treatment of potential duplicate businesses, and revise the treatment of reporting units in surveys as appropriate. | 2 - Medium | Link | Completed |
| 18 | The audit of on-line amendments should be more timely and frequent. The sample size of the audit should be reviewed and the audit should be focused on those amendments that can have material impact on the quality of the IDBR. Recommendations should be developed and agreed in partnership between the audit team and work areas. | 2 - Medium | Link | Completed |
| 19 | Business Registers Unit should extend the range of validation checks on inputs to ensure that statistical data present on the IDBR are of adequate quality. | 3 - Low | Link | Completed |
| 20 | Business Registers Unit (BRU) should develop a specific recruitment policy and training programme that reflects its specialist function. This policy should include arrangements to make sure that members of staff are encouraged to move within BRU and across Prices and Business Group to ensure a breadth, as well as a depth, of expertise. | 2 - Medium | Link | Completed |
| 21 | The Business Registers Unit should improve electronic communication with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment Northern Ireland to ensure consistent practice is adopted in the two departments. This should include consideration of how present legal constraints can be overcome in future. | 2 - Medium | Link | Completed |
| 22 | ONS should strengthen staff training with regard to the principles of maintaining and using a business register. The use of the Data Analyst and Statistical Analyst schemes for this purpose is endorsed. (Priority: 3) | 3 - Low | Link | Completed |
| 23 | Additional documentation should be produced for users of the Register. Part of this documentation should take the form of a frequently asked questions document. | 1 - High | Link | Completed |
| 24 | The existing quarterly and monthly management reports should be focused on measuring the impact on quality of changes to the Register. Business Registers Unit should continue to develop its monthly report of changes to the size and structure of the register in consultation with users. | 3 - Low | Link | Completed |
| 25 | An improved on-line interface should be developed to make it easier for authorised users to access and update the register. | 2 - Medium | Link | Deferred |
| 26 | ONS should ensure that the impact on outputs is assessed for any proposed changes to the IDBR. | 1 - High | Link | Completed |
| 27 | ONS's Register strategy group should take responsibility for overseeing the implementation of recommendations from projects relating to the improvement of the IDBR. The membership of the group should be reviewed and include a non-ONS member. | 1 - High | Link | Completed |
| 28 | ONS should change sample selection procedures to ensure stability of sample membership for businesses newly included in samples. | 2 - Medium | Link | Completed |
| 29 | ONS should set aside resources to study further the impact of births and deaths of enterprises on statistical outputs. | 1 - High | Link | Completed |

Recommendation 1 - Quality Measurement

Completion of Project Document.

Objective

ONS should publish regularly a wide range of measures of both the levels of the Inter-departmental Business Register (IDBR) quality and the change in quality over time. The existing user satisfaction questionnaire should be improved to include a wider range of questions relating to the IDBR quality and that of the service provided by the Business Registers Unit (BRU).

Action Taken

The user satisfaction survey questionnaire was revised and improved. A representative sample of users, stratified by category, were then contacted and asked to provide feedback. This was supplemented by a focus group meeting with key internal users to explore feedback issues in more depth. Once the user needs were known, quality requirements were determined and quality measures developed.

Results

The results of the actions described above have been fully documented in the following IDBR Management Committee Papers:
IDBRMC(02)11 ([available on request](#))- IDBR Review Implementation of Analysis 1- User Satisfaction Questionnaire.
IDBRMC(02)27 ([available on request](#))- IDBR Review Implementation of Analysis 1- Annual Quality Report.

Recommendation 2 – Comprehensive Business Directory

Completion of Project Document

Objective

The development of the Comprehensive Business Directory (CBD), should continue to be a priority within ONS, as a means of improving access to data from administrative sources, improving the quality of the Inter-departmental Business Register (IDBR) through better matching of source data and of reducing the need to collect data directly from businesses.

Action Taken

Stage 1 of the CBD work was funded by 'Invest to Save 1' finances and concluded in November 2001.

The final report ([available on request](#)) was submitted to HM Treasury in spring 2002.

Stage 2 of the project (which was solely funded by ONS) continued and a steering group meeting was held in April 2002 to agree the Project Initiation Document (PID) ([available on request](#)), plan the work programme and formalise arrangements. The primary aim for stage 2 was to develop the data warehouse hub structure to enable direct and secure access of administrative data from HM Customs and Excise (HMCE), Inland Revenue (IR) and Companies House (CH) to ONS, via the Government Gateway approach or suitable alternative.

Results

The CBD project concluded in September 2002. An end of project report ([available on request](#)) was produced and presented to the CBD project board and steering group. A summary report is also available on the National Statistics (NS) Website <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/businfo/>.

Recommendation 3 – Administrative Data

Completion of Project Document

Objective

To build on the existing relationships with HM Customs and Excise (HMCE), Inland Revenue (IR) and Companies House (CH), by:

- Extending the range of data supplied by the administrative departments to include, from HMCE: company numbers and previous VAT registration details and, from all administrative sources: comprehensive contact information.
- Improving the method and frequency of transferring data from the administrative sources.
- Considering within the scope of the current legal framework, feeding back industrial classification data to the administrative departments.
- Improving the quality of industrial classification coming from administrative sources by using consistent data-collection and coding techniques, and by supporting those people who classify businesses.

Action taken

Delivery of data:

- IR - Plan to cease delivery by magnetic tape at the end of 2002. Discussions took place between ONS and IR focusing on the aim change to electronic delivery in the long term.
- CH - Talks took place with CH with a view to changing the delivery of data from magnetic tape to an FTP or Web based system, in the near future.

Service Level Agreements (SLAs):

- HMCE - The SLA with HMCE expired in April 2002. It was agreed that a new SLA would be agreed for 2002/3 and renewed in March 2003. Proposed changes to the VAT Group system to be incorporated into the new SLA and include arrangements for the transfer of Intrastat information from HMCE to ONS - this is currently covered by a separate agreement, which was renewed in June 2002.
- CH - Discussion on a new SLA between ONS and CH took place and a draft SLA was sent to CH for comment/agreement in July 2002.
- IR - A current SLA with IR for 2002/2003 exists.

Classifications:

- CH - Were still unclear as to their policy regarding Operation 2002 but have queried several individual classifications with ONS.
- IR - Continue to use Trade Classification Numbers (TCN) to classify businesses - ONS have compiled a paper, for the IDBR Management Committee (IDBRMC) October 2002 meeting, detailing weaknesses in this system in terms of quality, and the shortcomings of the Standard Trade Classification (STC) – Standard Industrial Classification 92 (SIC92) look-up table currently being used by IR.

Results

Delivery of Data:

- HMCE - Changes to the VAT Groups system are planned. (Pending de-duplication of databases at HMCE) These changes include the supply of additional information such as contact telephone numbers and web site addresses.
- As soon as HMCE database de-duplication is complete, the method of transfer of HMCE data will change from the current paper based (VAT 51) system to electronic (Government Secure Intranet (GSI)) delivery and the frequency of data exchange will change from monthly to daily delivery.
- CH - Have carried out CD ROM data delivery as a temporary short term measure prior to changing to electronic delivery in the longer term. The same method of delivery has been introduced for IR with effect from January 2003.

SLAs:

- HMCE - The SLA between IDBR and HMCE was extended to March 2003, in line with all changes/amendments detailed above. Changes, which are agreed but not yet underway, will be reflected in next year's SLA.

Classifications:

- HMCE - have fully adopted the new Standard Industrial Classification 2003 (SIC 2003) classifications in line with the Operation 2002 project.
- CH - have adopted SIC 2003 at 4 digit level.
- IR - Talks are ongoing between ONS and IR regarding classification systems.

Recommendation 4 – Quality Standards

Completion of Project Document

Objective

Quality standards for industrial classification, legal status, company number and address should be agreed and documented by ONS and the administrative departments.

Action Taken

Recommendations from the CLAMOUR (CLAssifications MOdelling and Utilities Research) project were used to determine classification rules for ONS, HM Customs and Excise (HMCE), Inland Revenue (IR) and Companies House (CH) when the project was completed (March 2002). The earliest that agreement could be expected was September 2002 but that depended on the outcome of CLAMOUR.

Results

- Clamour information can be found at http://www.statistics.gov.uk/methods_quality/clamour/default.asp. There have been continued discussions/liaison, within the continued Comprehensive Business Directory (CBD) Steering Group. As a result of Operation 2002, both Companies House and HMCE have adopted SIC 2003. For Inland Revenue, no change has taken place to date, however work is still ongoing. (IDBRMC(02)33 [available on request](#))
- Further work is on the agenda of Business Data Sharing (BDS) Group programme with other departments who are part of Operation 2007 Steering Group.
- The Statistical Infrastructure Development Project (SIDP) within the ONS now has responsibility for developing the strategy for standardising classification systems. (Project Initiation Document (PID) [available on request](#)). The CLAMOUR work will feed into this.

Recommendation 5 – ARI Sample Design

Completion of Project Document

Objective

ONS should revise the Annual Register Inquiry (ARI) sample design and selection so that it:

- Completely enumerates enterprises with employment of 50 or more;
- Includes a wider range of enterprises with conflicting auxiliary information;
- Includes, every four years, enterprises with employment of 10 or more;
- Includes enterprises with employment of less than 10 only to the extent that is necessary for adequate quality measurement; and
- Can be used to update the Interdepartmental Business Register (IDBR) in an unbiased way

Action Taken

With the provision of funding from the Neighbourhood Statistics (NeSS) programme, it has been possible to implement this recommendation for 2002 and 2003. The sample now reflects the objectives above, and has been formally signed off by the ARI 2002 project board.

Results

The revised sample design is fully documented in product 1 of the BRU NeSS project ([available on request](#)).

Recommendation 6 – ARI: Improved Response and Compliance to SOTA

Completion of Project Document

Objective

In the Annual Register Inquiry (ARI):

- The response rate should be improved by following up non-response more effectively. The response rate for the largest enterprises should be 100%.
- The general procedures used by ONS to ensure compliance with the statistics of Trade Act 1947 should be applied rigorously to the ARI.

Action Taken

A response chasing strategy has been formulated and a project has been set up to take forward a number of initiatives aimed at ensuring that response rate targets are met, and where possible exceeded, and with less resource. The range of initiatives is extensive and is targeted mainly at new contributors, key and large contributors and persistent non-responders. For new contributors we are piloting the inclusion of a flier when businesses are first recruited to an inquiry, that explains about the inquiry and ONS. We are also actively chasing new contributors to ensure that they continue to regularly respond. A different approach has been introduced with success for large contributors, approaching the chief executive directly for outstanding returns from key businesses. For ARI specifically a response chasing and enforcement plan will also be produced to comply with a response target of 97% for enterprises with 250 or more employment (current response target is 80%).

Results

Implementation of the new response chasing strategy is now complete with the result that response rates have been improved as a result of the action taken during ARI/1 2001. Specifically,

| | Overall Response rate | 1000+ employment |
|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Original target | 80% | 100% |
| New target | 85% | 90% |
| Achieved rate | 85% | 92% |

For 8 cases, large contributors with a poor response record were referred to the Enforcement Unit.

A specific enforcement strategy ([available on request](#)) for ARI was also developed and implemented for ARI 2001. The referral of eight of the largest, persistent non-responders to the Enforcement Unit means that they will be taken through the enforcement process as part of ARI 2002. This is the first time enforcement

procedures have been applied within ARI/1. Enforcement procedures are now also in place for the 1000+-employment group.

Despite the ARI Inquiry's transfer from Runcorn to Newport and the inevitable learning curve for the staff concerned, there was no drop in the response rate. We will endeavour to maintain these improved response rates for future surveys.

Recommendation 7 – ARI: Questionnaire Design

Completion of Project Document

Objective

Questionnaire design for the Annual Register Inquiry (ARI) should be given priority within ONS's proposed business-survey questionnaire design project. Among the particular topics that need to be addressed are omission of local units; delineation of business units; feedback of known industrial classification information; and efficient collection of business description information.

Action Taken

Questionnaire design will be reviewed by May 2002 for the August 2002 ARI selection. The ARI will also provide the option to all businesses to provide returns electronically. This recommendation will be built into the design for Internet collection. The extent of the changes will depend on progress on the Methodology Group (MG) questionnaire design project and the ONS Internet data capture project.

Results

Given the complex nature of the work, the issue will be addressed over a wider time-scale. The transfer of ARI processing from Runcorn to Newport, as part of the Runcorn closure project, took place during 2002 and therefore changes to the questionnaire design for ARI 2002 were kept to a minimum.

Project Initiation document (PID) ([available on request](#)) and Product 2 forms design ARI 2002 ([available on request](#)).

MG is re-designing the ARI form as the first sub-project within their Questionnaire Redesign Project, with a pilot in December 2003, for full operational use in August 2004.

For details on progress against electronic returns of ARI data, see recommendation 8.

Recommendation 8 – ARI: Electronic Collection

Completion of Project Document

Objective

To extend the present electronic data-collection arrangements for the Annual Register Inquiry (ARI), as per recommendation 8 of the IDBR Review.

Action taken

In addition to contacting those contributors who already provided their ARI/1 data by "Special Arrangement" (SA), we identified and contacted all other ARI/1 contributors who had 20 or more local units, offering them the opportunity to provide their data for the 2001 inquiry by floppy disc. If they expressed interest, we sent them a detailed specification of our requirements along with detailed guidance notes on how to complete the spreadsheet we provided.

Results

Use of the electronic (floppy disk) method of data capture for ARI data was promoted to all larger contributors, as part of the preparatory work for ARI 2001. There was a 28% increase between 2000 and 2001 in the numbers of local units providing electronic returns. For 2001, 33% of returned local units provided the data by electronic means.

Of those contacted, the take-up rate was about 36%.

- The exercise resulted in an increase in the number of special arrangement businesses (reporting units) from 204 in ARI/1 2000 to 331 in ARI/1 2001, an increase of 38%.
- The number of local units covered by special arrangements increased from 109,040 in ARI/1 2000 to 140,305 in ARI/1 2001, an increase of 22%.
- In overall terms, while only 331 businesses out of the total 63,000 covered by the 2001 survey provided their data by special arrangement, these returns accounted for over 140,000 local units of the total 426,000 covered by the survey, around 33%.

A Project Initiation Document (PID) ([available on request](#)) and a document 'Product 6 – Special Arrangements' ([available on request](#)), have been produced as part of ARI 2002. Procedures are in place to further promote the use of SAs, prior to the start of the annual ARI cycle in July/August 2002.

Web-collection is outside of the scope of this project.

Recommendation 9 – Classification Priorities

Completion of Project Document

Objective

The Annual Register Inquiry (ARI), Business Profiling Team (BPT) and the administrative sources should have highest priority for updating Inter-departmental Business Register (IDBR) auxiliary information. In the case of industrial classification, this depends on improvements to the current level of quality of information from those sources. Other sources should be used by the Business Registers Unit (BRU) to resolve uncertainty and ambiguity.

Action Taken

Each year the priority for updating classifications is reviewed by the IDBR User Committee (IDBRUC) (IDBRUC(02)11 [available on request](#)). The priorities of updating classifications this year changed the priority of the ARI, so that it was used in preference to other sources for unproven and single site enterprises. Other priorities remained as in previous years. Next year consideration should be given to increasing the priority of multi-unit enterprises that have returned information for ARI. The profiling priority was already high and remained the second highest preference. The administrative sources were lower in the order of preference due to uncertainty on the accuracy of data. Work took place to compare the information from PRODCOM (PROducts of the European COMMunity) with the IDBR and files were provided to update the IDBR with data for the annual update. It was found that many of the classification changes had also been changed the previous year and investigation established that there was no inertia rule in place. It was agreed that this would be introduced in time for next year. The files were added to the IDBR as future information and following the annual update at the end of July work was necessary to revert those cases, which had been added to the file in error.

Results

The priorities for updating auxiliary information have been amended (Annex B IDBRUC(02)11 [available on request](#)). The profiling team had, and has retained, the highest priority for the cases they have profiled.

Bringing forward the comparison of data between PRODCOM and other sources already held, identified classification issues early and revealed that PRODCOM identified the product with the most impact and classified accordingly. This issue is included in a data confrontation paper ([available on request](#)), presented to the IDBR User Committee in October 2002.

A new version of the automatic coder was rolled out (April 2002) and all areas have been encouraged to use this to code descriptions to improve consistency over time.

An inertia rule was introduced in January 2003. Since then PRODCOM has only changed Standard Industrial Classification, (SIC) in accordance with the rule.

Recommendation 10 – Precision Data Coder

Completion of Project Document

Objective

The agreed electronic tool should be used to aid classifying business descriptions. All staff members should feed back information on deficiencies to those controlling the system to improve the quality of the coding tool. The use of expertise from outside ONS (for example, industry groups) should be considered as a way of improving coding quality. ONS should review the Precision Data Coder (PDC) alongside other similar products to ensure that the most effective tool for the job is used.

Action Taken

A Precision Data Coder manager will be appointed with the objective of ensuring that the PDC is available to all users. That person will ensure that training is provided for all users. This will take effect from September 2001. Other tools will be reviewed in line with plans for procurement of the PDC or a replacement coding system and the ONS infrastructure project on corporate tools for classification. Any changes will be in line with ONS corporate objective on statistical infrastructure.

Results

An upgraded (32-bit) software version of the PDC package was rolled out within ONS, with a further upgrade, incorporating some new Standard Industrial Classification 92 (SIC92) subclasses rolled out during April 2002. Further work on this is now being taken forward by the Statistical Infrastructure Development Project (SIDP) within the ONS, who have taken over responsibility for developing the strategy for standardising classification systems. Further amendments have incorporated the move to SIC 2003 from January 2003

Documentation is available on the ONS internal Standards and Guidance (StaG) database ([available on request](#)). Training via the newly upgraded Register Information Processor Scheme (RIPS)/ARI module commenced in August 2002 and was recently accredited by Oxford, Cambridge and the Royal College of Arts (OCR). Included in this training is batch coding procedures for the PDC.

Recommendation 11 – Classification Rules

Completion of Project Document

Objective

The rules for updating the industrial classification and employment variables, set up to maintain stability of sample membership for short-period inquiries, should be reviewed to see if they could better accommodate register maintenance requirements and should be applied rigorously.

Action Taken

This recommendation is an extension of the work planned under recommendation 9. It will be pursued with users through the IDBR Management Committee (IDBRMC), which will revise its terms of reference.

A paper was presented to the IDBR User committee in May 2002 (IDBRMC(02)10 [available on request](#)). It was discussed by the meeting and it was agreed that there should be no change at the moment. It was explained that Methodology Group (MG) would be looking at this issue in detail in the near future, so it would not be appropriate to make any changes which might be short term.

Results

The IDBRMC has revised its terms of reference to specifically include the management of recommendation 11 (IDBRMC(01)26 [available on request](#)).

ONS's MG has identified the scope of an in-depth sampling review, which will cover this topic.

Recommendation 12 – Profiling Strategy

Completion of Project Document

Objective

A business profiling strategy should be agreed based on two objective measures: the level of secondary activity; and the impact on survey estimates and analyses. A solution should be developed to bring profiling and Annual Register Inquiry (ARI) operations together for the largest businesses. A trigger mechanism should be established for sub-annual profiling of the most complex enterprises.

Action Taken

The main triggers for profiling are complexity, hand in hand with size, and difficulties experienced by contributors in completing forms due to the structure in place on the Inter-departmental Business Register (IDBR). On an annual basis, the team requests data on businesses with a high level of secondary activity. These businesses are profiled where the secondary activity has greater than 100 employment. The resource available for this work is limited so much of it is done through existing sources, but where necessary, profiling is done through telephoning and visiting. It has been established that the legal structure of a business is not necessarily the operating structure and a more appropriate structure for the completion of statistical forms could be divisional or regional. The number of businesses that fall into the categories above is greater than the resource available so a rolling programme has been established with the team tackling a quarter of all businesses in the profiling area (estimated at just over 1,500 cases in 2001). This is in line with European regulations.

Results

A short term solution is to provide these large businesses with a disk of the local units currently held and count the response to this as the ARI/1 response, either for the previous period, if that has not been received or for the following period, forcing it into the selection. The difficulty comes when the business has either already responded within the 12 month period or the next selection is up to 6 months in the future.

The profiling strategy and specification ([available on request](#)) put forward a solution for bringing the profiling of large businesses and ARI operations together. These improved management functions will be implemented under the ONS re-engineering project.

It is essential to review the workplan on an annual basis and this will be done as part of the annual planning round in November/December each year. This will identify those cases that are a priority for profiling, which is supplemented during the year by referrals from inquiry sources.

Recommendation 13 – Profiling Programme

Completion of Project Document

Objective

The Business Profiling Team (BPT) should initially establish the correct structures of the businesses at the desk. For complex businesses, an agreed programme of profiling visits should be put in place, and this should be made available to survey managers in advance. The BPT should ensure that data collection and survey results managers are informed, in advance, of its updates to business structures on the Inter-departmental Business Register (IDBR).

Action Taken

A structures group, set up to investigate the issues surrounding the structure of complex businesses met several times and a paper was produced (IDBR Structures and Restructures Group Final Report; IDBR (03) 06 [available on request](#)) which made a number of recommendations for change. The paper was presented to the IDBR User committee (IDBRUC) and agreement reached that the recommendation is implemented. The profiling plan was changed to cover communication with survey managers. The IDBRUC was asked to provide updated lists of contacts from both the processing and results areas. The automatic pre-profile minute, which informs of a profile when it has been amended to reflect the additional requirements.

Results

Requests for change to the database have now been partly implemented. Survey, processing and results managers are informed in advance of profiling work. Additional refinement has been requested to inform managers when action has been agreed with a business, immediately before its implementation. A timetable ([available on request](#)) is being produced to deal with the implementation of these recommendations. The profiling plan ([available on request](#)) has been amended to conform to the changes in processing.

Recommendation 14 – Confidentiality - Coherence

Completion of Project Document

Objective

To reduce the burden on business and improve coherence across National Statistics, ONS should explore with other government departments, opportunities, within the requirements for maintaining data confidentiality, to co-ordinate the collection of data relating to the structure of complex enterprises.

Action Taken

Files of possible cases were sent to Department of Trade and Industry Construction Market Intelligence (DTI CMI) and Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). Both departments returned cases that they were interested in. The closer links with DTI CMI made their cases more viable for initial visits. Timing of visits is at the discretion of the business and availability of case officers from both departments has to be considered. Future cases will be established through a report produced during the processing of the quarterly CD from DTI.

Results

The report produced from the exchange of data with DTI CMI has revealed a number of cases in need of combined profiling. The first combined visit took place in late April, proving a successful start to the programme.

Profiling businesses of interest to DEFRA is dealt with slightly differently. Prior to a profile taking place on food industry or agricultural businesses, the DEFRA officer is contacted and informed of the case. They are asked if they have any issues with the business concerned and whether they wish to accompany the case officer.

There is a separate NS review of farm structures and farm surveys, which will address the issues. ONS involvement will start with a video conference arranged for 4 June. A change to IDBR Management Committee (IDBRMC) terms of reference to ensure proper consultation, has been drafted, and sent to members for comment. They will be discussed at the next committee meeting in mid-June.

Recommendation 15 – Survey Specific Reporting Units

Completion of Project Document

Objective

A detailed review of the requirements for survey-specific reporting arrangements should be carried out with the aim of standardising reporting arrangements for all surveys. Where non-standard arrangements are necessary, the procedures for managing them should be simplified.

Action Taken

Once the review was initiated, a paper was discussed at the IDBR User Committee (IDBRUC) in May ([available on request](#)).

A project board was established to consider better control procedures for inquiry specific information. The project board held its first meeting on 25 September 2002 to discuss the draft Project Initiation Document (PID)([available on request](#)), membership and scope of the project. A revised PID ([available on request](#)) was circulated, for comment, on 7 October 2002 and the final version was available at end October 2002, but has subsequently been enhanced to further clarify product descriptions. The Final Report documents how tighter controls and procedures for inquiry specific information, where justified, were introduced. The report also summarises the outcomes of their implementation ([available on request](#))."

Results

The January 2003 Project Board reviewed progress and confirmed that the Inquiry Specific project would review and identify existing procedures and maintenance routines. The documentation has been amended where appropriate, to clarify procedures and housekeeping maintenance processes will be run annually in March. Other recommendations will feed into the IDBR re-engineering project.

Recommendation 16 – Department of Trade and Industry - Undercoverage

Completion of Project Document

Objective

ONS should work with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to improve the method of estimating the under-coverage that arises from businesses not required to register with HM Customs and Excise (HMCE) and Inland Revenue (IR).

Action Taken

ONS and DTI Small Business Service (SBS) produced a paper for the IDBR Management Committee (IDBRMC(02)20 [available on request](#)), which recommends a number of changes to the methodology. This will be taken further, outside this project, starting with an inter-departmental meeting on business demography issues in July 2003.

Results

The paper IDBRMC(02) 20 "Undercoverage due to non-registration of small businesses" ([available on request](#)) refers.

Recommendation 17 – Bias – Duplicate Businesses

Completion of Project Document

Objective

ONS should measure any bias that may arise because of the treatment of potential duplicate businesses, and revise the treatment of reporting units in surveys as appropriate.

Action Taken

This recommendation was implemented in conjunction with a review of the content of the monthly report that currently informs users about the size and changes to the register. Potential duplication arises from the use of two independent sources to maintain the register. Possible duplicates are excluded from the Inter-departmental Business Register (IDBR) as a precautionary measure. Following extensive matching work, the level of duplication has been reduced, and the matching procedures have been improved. It is important to measure the coverage of the IDBR, both in terms of businesses that are potentially missing (undercoverage) and businesses that are erroneously recorded on the register (overcoverage). Analyses were carried out using Annual Register Inquiry (ARI) data in order to establish the proportion of units/employment missing from inquiry populations therefore excluding potential duplicate business.

Results

The results of the actions described above have been fully documented in the following IDBR Management Committee (IDBRMC) Paper:
IDBRMC(02)12 - IDBR REVIEW - IMPLEMENTATION OF ANALYSIS RECS - Development of Analysis Reports ([available on request](#)).

Recommendation 18 – Audit Review

Completion of Project Document

Objective

The audit of on-line amendments should be more timely and frequent. The sample size of the audit should be reviewed and the audit should be focused on those amendments that can have material impact on the quality of the Inter-departmental Business Register (IDBR). Recommendations should be developed and agreed in partnership between the audit team and work areas.

Action Taken

A review of current audit procedures was conducted with the specific aim of meeting the objectives above. This resulted in a report ([available on request](#)) containing a number of recommendations for changes to current practices.

Results

The work was completed as a formal project, documented in the report mentioned above. The project board agreed this and the recommendations contained in it are being implemented, except where a programming change is required, when a request for change has been made.

An update of the status of the proposals for this recommendation has been produced, in the form of a response to the Audit review report ([available on request](#)).

Recommendation 19 – Validation Checks

Completion of Project Document

Objective

Business Registers Unit (BRU) should extend the range of validation checks on inputs to ensure that statistical data present on the Inter-departmental Business Register (IDBR) are of adequate quality.

Action taken

ONS conducted a systematic examination of all of its computer processes and identified changes that would address this recommendation, subject to programmer resources.

Results

An audit was requested to report on the current validation checks in the input data processes. The individual reports for each aspect were collated into a single document and posted on the Standards and Guidance database (StaG) ([available on request](#))

The completed audit report was passed to ONS Methodology Group (MG), who considered new validation checks, some of which could be introduced as soon as programmer resources are available and others which will feed into the IDBR re-engineering project.

Recommendation 20 – Training

Completion of Project Document

Objective

Business Registers Unit (BRU) should develop a specific recruitment policy and training programme that reflects its specialist function. This policy should include arrangements to make sure that members of staff are encouraged to move within BRU and across Prices and Business Group (PBG) to ensure a breadth, as well as a depth, of expertise.

Action Taken

The Data Analyst Scheme (DAS) within the Business Data Division (BDD) of the ONS, provides the basis for a BRU training programme.

The business plan for 2001/2 for BRU includes temporary secondment to the Business Profiling Team (BPT) at B1 level.

Results

A pilot team of BRU candidates tested the Register Information Processors Scheme (RIPS) modules during September 2001 and throughout early 2002. The Oxford, Cambridge and Royal Society of Arts (OCR) accredit the new scheme, which is now in place.

The DAS project, incorporating the additional modules (including RIPS), was completed in March 2002 and launched in April 2002. The RIPS End of Project Report ([available on request](#)) was produced.

Profiling implemented a four-month secondment opportunity from October 2002 - January 2003, with a second secondment planned to run from February 2003 - June 2003. These secondments will continue, subject to available funding.

Recommendation 21 – Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, Northern Ireland

Completion of Project Document

Objective

Business Register Unit (BRU) should improve electronic communication with Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment Northern Ireland (DETINI) in order to ensure consistent practice is adopted in the two departments. This should include consideration of how present legal constraints can be overcome in future.

Action taken

The IDBR Management Committee (IDBRMC) revised their terms of reference (IDBRMC(01)26 [available on request](#)) to specifically include the management of recommendation 21.

Checks were undertaken on DETINI's level of Government Secure Intranet (GSI) access, in order to determine the best way to take this issue forward. This issue was examined on two levels;

- Determining a short-term solution for secure transmissions.
- Longer-term options were discussed with technical and legal representatives within ONS and DETINI to assess the current viability of using the GSI.

Results

A short-term solution for secure IDBR transmission was put in place utilising Cryptocard (which is now a standard package within the Office).

For small-scale transfers of data the GSI can be used, but there is a limit to the volume of data that the GSI can cope with, i.e. 2.5 - 3 Mb.

Legal aspects and more future-based developments are covered within the Comprehensive Business Directory (CBD) project. The development of GSI access was being taken forward within the CBD project. IDBRMC (02) 24 - Transferring IDBR data over the Government Secure Intranet (GSI) ([available on request](#)), is available upon request.

Recommendation 22 – Data Analyst Scheme

Completion of Project Document

Objective

ONS should strengthen staff training with regard to the principles of maintaining and using a business register. The use of the Data Analyst (DAS) and Statistical Analyst (SAS) schemes for this purpose is endorsed.

Action Taken

This is addressed by the planned introduction of the DAS for Business Register Unit (BRU) staff for which funding has been allocated from the DAS project. We will also consider extension of training more widely within the ONS and other government departments once DAS for BRU is in place.

Results

The DAS project incorporating additional modules (including Register Information Processors Scheme (RIPS)) was completed in March 2002 and launched in April 2002.

Two documents have been produced;

- Finalised modules for RIPS ([available on request](#));
- RIPS end of project report documents ([available on request](#)).

Recommendation 23 – Documentation

Completion of Project Document

Objective

Additional documentation should be produced for users of the Register. Part of this documentation should take the form of a 'Frequently Asked Questions' document (FAQ).

Action Taken

The clerical manual has been converted to the ONS new standards and is now being extended. It is available in electronic format on a database for ONS users. Key external users receive copies on a CDROM on a regular basis. The documentation now includes a "Frequently Asked Questions" section. The IDBR FAQ documentation on the National Statistics web-site has been reviewed and improved.

Results

The FAQ document and detailed documentation has been produced ([available on request](#)).

The improved web information can be found at - <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/idbr>

Recommendation 24 – Management Reports

Completion of Project Document

Objective

The existing quarterly and monthly management reports should be focused on measuring the impact on quality of changes to the Register. Business Registers Unit (BRU) should continue to develop its monthly report of changes to the size and structure of the register in consultation with users.

Action Taken

An IDBR Review Implementation Analysis Project was set up to implement recommendations 1, 17, 24 and 26 of the IDBR Review. The Project Initiation Document (PID) ([available on request](#)) is available upon request. For recommendation 24, the Analysis Monthly Report (AMR) provides a summary of the main changes month to month on the register. This has been developed in consultation with users. IDBR Management Committee Paper IDBRMC(02)12 ([available on request](#)) refers. The changes to the AMR were staggered, and implemented as resources allowed. All changes were incorporated by the January 2003 report.

Results

An AMR report that better meets the stated needs of users. March 2003 report IDBRMC(03)13 ([available on request](#)) refers.

Recommendation 25 – Online Interface

Deferred

Objective

An improved on-line interface should be developed to make it easier for authorised users to access and update the register.

Action Taken

This recommendation has been deferred, and the work on the recommendation has been subsumed within the Statistical Infrastructure Development Programme (SIDP), as part of the phase 2 project to re-engineer the business register.

Recommendation 26 – Impact on Outputs

Completion of Project Document

Objective

ONS should ensure that the impact on outputs is assessed for any proposed changes to the Inter-departmental Business Register (IDBR).

Action Taken

In order to achieve this, a mechanism for reporting proposed changes to the IDBR has been put in place for all areas that directly update the IDBR. This will ensure all changes are monitored and assessed effectively.

The mechanism should ensure three things are carried out prior to changes being made to the IDBR:

- Identification of all proposed changes
- Measurement of the impact this will have on users through an appropriate impact analysis
- Feedback of changes and impact to users of the IDBR

Procedures already in place for monitoring changes made to the IDBR within Business Registers Unit, (BRU), have been improved, to ensure the IDBR Review Recommendation is met fully. This involves carrying out impact analyses, scheduling proposed changes and documentation of the changes.

Results

The results of the actions described above have been fully documented in the IDBR Management Committee Paper IDBRMC(02)14 - IDBR Review Analysis - Measuring Impact ([available on request](#)).

Recommendation 27 – Register Strategy Group

Completion of Project Document

Objective

ONS's Register strategy group should take responsibility for overseeing the implementation of recommendations from projects relating to the improvement of the Inter-departmental Business Register (IDBR). The membership of the group should be reviewed and include a non-ONS member.

Action Taken

The IDBR Strategy Group has discussed and approved the implementation plan for ONS users. The project will report to the IDBR Management Committee (IDBRMC) and the ONS Economic Statistics Board so the IDBR Strategy Group will be discontinued.

Results

The IDBRMC is now responsible for overseeing the implementation of the IDBR Review. The paper 'IDBR Management Committee terms of reference' (IDBRMC(01)26 ([available on request](#))) refers.

Recommendation 28 – Changing Sample Selection

Completion of Project Document

Objective

ONS should change sample selection procedures to ensure stability of sample membership for businesses newly included in samples.

Action Taken

A solution has been agreed and a specification developed. Testing has now been completed for endpoint enhancement and was discussed at the March IDBR User Committee (IDBRUC) meeting.

Results

Improved Sampling procedures, including endpoint enhancement are in place.

Recommendation 29 – Impact on Births and Deaths

Completion of Project Document

Objective

ONS should set aside resources to study further the impact of births and deaths of enterprises on statistical outputs.

Action Taken

This requirement links in with Eurostat work on enterprise demography. Work commenced under a contract with Eurostat to provide methodological and analytical input. The first harmonised data collection from Member States took place during the summer of 2002; results will be available by the summer of 2003. Methodology and indicators on the economic impact of enterprise births and deaths are being developed, and were discussed at a Eurostat Working Group meeting in April 2003. Further work in both the UK and EU contexts will take place outside this project during 2003.

Results

UK data on enterprise births and deaths agreed in line with emerging changes and comply with the new EU standards circulated to Member States.

Annex B – Future Work:

| Rec. no. | Future Work |
|-----------|--|
| 3 | Changes to the VAT Groups system are planned and will take place once de-duplication of databases at HM Customs and Excise (HMCE) takes place |
| 3 | The method of transfer/delivery of HMCE data will change from paper base to electronic delivery (By Government Secure (GSI) delivered daily, not monthly as is currently the case. |
| 3 | The Service Level Agreement (SLA) between IDBR and HMCE should be updated to reflect the changes which are agreed and underway, and those changes which are due to take place in the year ahead. This work has been carried out and the SLA for 2003/2004 has been updated accordingly, agreed and signed by both parties |
| 3 | Talks are ongoing between ONS and Inland Revenue (IR) regarding classification systems. |
| 4 | Responsibility for developing the strategy for standardising classification systems is now with the Statistical Infrastructure Development Project (SIDP) within ONS. |
| 6 | Maintenance of improved response rates in the Annual Register Inquiry for future surveys. Response rates for 2002 are available in September. |
| 7 | The Questionnaire Redesign project will be responsible for the redesign of the ARI form as their first sub-project. A pilot is scheduled for December 2003 and full operational use in August 2004. |
| 9 | A report on the impact of PRODCOM's Inertia rule will be available in October, following the Annual update. |
| 10 and 22 | Feedback will provided at the end of 2003, on the number of staff completing the Register Information Processor scheme, which includes training on batch coding procedures for the Precision Data Coder (PDC). |
| 12 | A review of the workplan will take place on an annual basis, in November/December each year. This will identify cases that are priority for profiling. |
| 13 | Changes to the database have been requested in order that managers may be informed of actions agreed with businesses before implementation. |
| 14 | IDBR Management Committee (IDBRMC) Terms of Reference (TOR) to be updated, to ensure proper consultation takes place between ONS and other government departments. The new TOR will be circulated among IDBRMC members in advance of the June meeting, and discussed and agreed at that meeting. |
| 14 | A report on the progress made regarding co-ordinated visits will be available in December. |
| 15 | Other recommendations identified as a result of the Inquiry Specific project will feed into the IDBR Re-engineering project. |
| 19 | New validation checks will be introduced as soon as programmer resources become available. |
| 19 | Validation checks not able to be resourced at this stage will be fed into the IDBR Re-engineering Project. |
| 20 | Secondments to take place on the Profiling team. |
| 29 | The results of the first harmonised data collection from member states, which took place during Summer 2002, will be available by summer 2003. |

Annex C - Glossary of Abbreviations

| | |
|----------|---|
| ABI | Annual Business Inquiry |
| ARI | Annual Register Inquiry |
| BPT | Business Profiling Team |
| BRU | Business Registers Unit |
| BST | Business Structures Team |
| CBU | Complex Business Unit |
| CH | Companies House |
| CLAMOUR | CLAssifications Modelling and Utilities Research |
| D&B | Dun and Bradstreet |
| DETINI | Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment Northern Ireland |
| DTI | Department of Trade and Industry |
| ESA | European System of Accounts |
| Eurostat | The Statistical Office the European Community (also SOEC) |
| HMCE | HM Customs and Excise |
| IDBR | Inter Departmental Business Register |
| IR | Inland Revenue |
| ISRU | Inquiry Specific Reporting Unit |
| KAU | Kind of Activity Unit |
| LFS | Labour Force Survey |
| MAFF | Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food |
| MG | Methodology Group |
| NACE | Nomenclature générale des activités Economiques dans les Communautés européennes |
| NAW | National Assembly for Wales |
| NSI | National Statistical Institute |
| OGD | Other Government Department |
| ONS | Office for National Statistics |
| PAYE | Pay As You Earn |
| PBG | Prices and Business Group |
| PDC | Precision Data Coder |
| PPI | Producer Price Index |
| PRODCOM | PRODucts of the European COMmunity |
| RQS | Register Quality Survey |
| SIC(92) | Standard Industrial Classification (revised 1992) |
| SoTA | Statistics of Trade Act 1947 |
| SPC | Statistical Programme Committee |
| TCN | Trade Classification Number |
| UNECE | United Nations Economic Commission for Europe |
| VAT | Value Added Tax |