

# Statement

27 February 2009

## Evidence for Assessments

### Context

Section 12 of the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007* establishes a presumption that the process of assessment is to be evidence based:

- The person responsible for any official statistics in relation to which an assessment is being made ... must provide the Board with such information about the statistics as it may reasonably require (section 12(3))
- The Board may in exercising its functions [relating to assessment] ... take into account information or advice received from any person (section 12(6))

Consistent with this general framework, the Authority's Statement of Principles and Procedures for Assessment says that assessments will:

- Take account of correspondence and discussion with the managers responsible for the statistics
- Take account of self-evaluation evidence from the relevant managers; and
- Involve an opportunity for users of statistics and other stakeholders to contribute to the assessment, and explicitly consider any such contribution.

The Statement also says that self-evaluations will be conducted using a standard template, based on the Code.

This note summarises the Monitoring and Assessment Team's approach to collecting evidence for assessments.

### Collecting evidence

The UK Statistics Authority's Monitoring and Assessment Team will collect evidence to support its recommendations about assessment and designation from:

1. Statistical producers, via
  - written "self evaluation" evidence (based on a template on the website), which will focus on the provision of (links to) relevant documents that will help the M&A Team understand the strengths and weaknesses of the set of statistics in question; and
  - face-to-face interviews with a range of staff which will help the M&A team ensure that they understand the written material in relation to the Code, and to identify areas of good practice.
2. Users and other stakeholders (identified, in the first instance, by producers):
  - By asking them to complete a written questionnaire or to provide comments in whatever way they feel appropriate, and to follow-up with face-to-face interviews, phone or email contact, or if relevant, focus group type meetings, or meetings with users representatives. The questionnaire will be available on the website.

- The purpose of such contacts is to identify issues that the M&A Team may want to raise with producers, and to gauge users' views of the extent of their engagement with producers
- The purpose is *not* to produce user satisfaction statistics. Users will be selected purposively to receive a questionnaire (in practice we might email all (or all main) identified users depending on numbers and coverage) in order for us to identify issues that will lead to as comprehensive and rounded an assessment of the extent to which the set of statistics are meeting users' needs and the public good as possible.

3. Its own investigations and review of relevant websites, and statistical releases.

The Authority's website will also contain an open invitation for interested parties to express their views about the set of statistics under consideration, which the Authority will publicise.

The entirety of evidence will be used to judge whether we consider that the Code of Practice is being followed in the production of the particular set of statistics, and to support recommendations to the Authority.