

Statement

2 December 2008

Designation as National Statistics

The Statistics and Registration Service Act (2007) requires that where the Authority determines that the Code of Practice has been complied with or, for re-assessments, continues to be complied with, it must designate such statistics as "National Statistics". Otherwise, it must decline to designate them. A "Statement of Principles and Procedures for Assessment" will accompany the Code of Practice to be published in early 2009; this note complements that statement.

The decision to designate means that the statistical product meets the standard across a range of characteristics. It does not necessarily mean that the product is ideal in every regard. The Authority's Monitoring and Assessment (M&A) Team may still highlight areas that it feels could be addressed to further strengthen the output and its usefulness.

The decision not to designate a statistic, or to cancel designation for an existing National Statistic, will signify that the M&A Team identified significant non-compliance with the Code. The M&A Team will report those areas. Producer bodies will respond as they consider appropriate - ideally by agreeing with the Authority a timetable for re-assessment.

The Authority expects there to be occasions when an Assessment against the Code suggests that the statistics meet the required standard for designation in most but not all respects. In such cases, the Authority may decide, in the interests of getting maximum benefit from the assessment process, to allow the producer body to make some remedial changes over a pre-determined period, in order for the statistics to become compliant with the Code and hence for designation to be recommended.

In practice, this means the M&A Team may delay completion of the Assessment for a few months. The Team would revisit the producer body at the end of the agreed extension period and, if appropriate changes had been made, the Team would be able to recommend designation. In such cases, the M&A Team will issue an Interim Assessment Report setting out the available information and explaining why a 'pending designation' position has been reached; and the deadline for the Assessment to be completed. The Interim Assessment Report would be replaced in due course by the final report.

Recommendations by the M&A Team to the Authority about designations will be based on the evidence available at the time of the Assessment. The Authority will expect departments to report material changes to activities that could have an ongoing impact on designation to the M&A Team, and the Authority may choose to re-assess such statistics.