



An Phríomh-Oifig Staidrimh
Central Statistics Office



Memorandum of Understanding

Environmental Protection Agency

and

Central Statistics Office

The objective of this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is to set out areas of mutual responsibility and shared interest between the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Central Statistics Office (CSO).

Signed:

Pádraig Dalton
Director General
CSO

Date: 13/2/12

Signed:

Laura Burke
Director General
EPA

Date: 13/2/13.

Introduction

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Central Statistics Office (CSO) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is intended to provide a framework for enhanced cooperation in areas of mutual interest, leading to greater efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of the respective work programmes of both organisations.

EPA

The EPA is an independent public body established under the Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has responsibilities for a wide range of licensing, enforcement, monitoring, assessment, research and reporting activities associated with environmental protection and environmental data management.

The EPA's mission is:

"To protect and improve the environment as a valuable asset for the people of Ireland".

The EPA is active at EU level in relation to compliance with EU and European Environment Agency environmental, as well as data supply, obligations under a variety of directives, regulations, and international protocols.

CSO

The CSO's mandate, as set out in the Statistics Act 1993 is:

"the collection, compilation, extraction and dissemination for statistical purposes of information relating to economic, social and general activities and conditions in the State".

The CSO is also responsible for co-ordinating official statistics of other public authorities and for developing the statistical potential of administrative records. The Central Statistics Office plays an active role at international level. As part of the European Statistical System the CSO participates in the development and harmonisation of European and International statistics. The CSO's work programme is strongly influenced by EU mandatory reporting requirements.

Purpose of Memorandum of Understanding (Overview)

The objective of this MoU is to provide a framework for EPA and CSO cooperation and assistance in areas of environmental data governance. Its implementation should facilitate the free and timely exchange of relevant information and data; will support our respective EU and other international reporting responsibilities; promote best practice in areas of common interest; improve quality; and be without

prejudice to the statutory responsibilities and obligations of both organisations. Cooperation should also lead to efficiencies for both organisations, as well as for industry and others, in relation to the potential to maximise the use of available data, and survey streamlining (avoiding duplication of effort).

The adoption of this MoU will facilitate work in existing areas of shared interest and cooperation such as national emissions inventories and projections and environmental reporting.

The MoU is in line with the recommendations of the National Statistics Board in its Strategy for Statistics 2009-2014 in regard to according a high priority to the development of environment statistics and working with other public authorities in order to avoid overlaps in data collection. It is consistent with EU and Irish government policies of reducing the administrative burden. It is also fully consistent with the proposal contained in the European Statistics Code of Practice that administrative sources of data be used wherever possible to avoid duplicating requests for information.

General Principles of Cooperation

EPA acknowledges a stakeholder role for the CSO in those EPA data holdings required as inputs into statistical processing. The CSO shall use the data provided by EPA for statistical purposes only, in accordance with the Statistics Act, 1993 and EU statistical law. The CSO will ensure that all linking of EPA data with other data sources, both CSO and non-CSO, will be carried out in accordance with the CSO Data Protocol.

The CSO acknowledges that it is a key data provider and that EPA has statistical and data requirements, and agrees, where feasible and in line with the Statistics Act, 1993, to try to meet these requirements by providing statistical analyses of CSO data and other administrative data holdings in the form of non-confidential, aggregate-level data. The EPA shall use any data provided by CSO for statistical and data reporting purposes only, in accordance with the Statistics Act, 1993 and EU statistical law.

Operational Liaison

All significant communications - including sign-off - associated with programme support agreements or data exchange arrangements advanced under this MOU shall be made through the identified *Liaison Officers* for each organisation - for EPA, the Programme Manager for Reporting & Assessment, and for CSO, the Senior Statistician responsible for Trade & Environmental Statistics.

The CSO and EPA shall establish the CSO/EPA Liaison Group as a formal, high-level mechanism for consultation and communication between both organisations.

It shall be the responsibility of the Liaison Group to consider all data and cooperative matters, and related issues of mutual interest.

The Liaison Group will include representatives from CSO and EPA. These representatives will include - but not be restricted to - the Liaison Officers identified above as well as the Programme Manager for Climate, Research, & Resources Unit, from the EPA and the Assistant Director General for Macro-economic statistics, and the Director for Business statistics, and/or their delegates.

The Liaison Group will meet at least annually to review areas of cooperation and progress regarding same, as well as devise action items where relevant. Minutes of these meetings will be agreed and held by both organisations.

The Liaison Group may also decide to refer certain matters of cooperation to technical sub-groups or make other arrangements to examine matters of common interest and technical exchange. Such groups may examine matters of a technical, legal or administrative nature where co-operation may provide opportunities for efficiencies and effectiveness in relation to mutual and respective roles. Such working groups as may be established from time to time will operate under an agreed Terms of Reference or protocol and report to the Liaison Group. Technical exchange protocols (including Officer of Statistics Mandates as may be granted) will be agreed on specific areas of common interest such as climate change data and waste data, and these will be held in electronic format by the two Liaison Officers. All technical exchange protocols will be reviewed annually, with revisions - where proposed - to be notified to the Liaison Officers for joint approval, and recorded at the Annual Liaison Meeting.

Memorandum of Understanding Review

This MoU will come into force on the date of signing and shall remain in force until replaced or withdrawn by mutual consent.

The effective operation of this MoU may be subject to change or revision following annual review of progress by Liaison Group with recommendations for change made to, and accepted by, the respective signatories.

Data Protection

This EPA Liaison Officer role shall encompass a Data Custodian function, with responsibility for the management and use of CSO data by the EPA. Likewise, the CSO Liaison Officer shall act as the main point of contact with the EPA with similar responsibilities.

The CSO and EPA shall maintain the appropriate infrastructure to ensure the secure transfer and storage of data. All requests for data transfer and (including amendments to data transfers) will be submitted through the Liaison Officers and

will be considered by the Liaison Group taking into account the relevant legal and resource implications. EPA and CSO will ensure that data will only be exchanged between their respective organisations using secure transfer routes.

The CSO and EPA respectively undertake that all data received from each other shall be treated as strictly confidential and shall be used for statistical purposes only, in accordance with national and EU statistical law, and also in conformity with the Data Protection Acts.

Statistical Quality

EPA and the CSO agree to cooperate in examining the quality and appropriateness of EPA data for statistical purposes. Recommendations towards improvement in the statistical quality of EPA data will be considered by the Liaison Group or appropriate technical sub-group, and implemented where feasible.

End.

