



**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: 17/07/19

**Signed:**

Laura Burke  
Director General  
EPA

Date: 12/7/2019

## **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, radiological, and reporting activities associated with environmental and radiological 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. To protect our people and the environment from the harmful effects of radiation and pollution".*

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, waste statistics, and environmental reporting.

The MoU is in line with the recommendations of the National Statistics Board in its Strategy for Statistics 2015-2020 in relation to according a high priority to the development of environmental statistics and working with other public authorities 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 Evidence & Assessment, and for CSO, the Senior Statistician in Environment and Climate Division.

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 Programme Managers from other data collection/reporting areas in the EPA, and the Assistant Director General for the Statistical Systems Coordination Unit, 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. Once signed, this MOU supersedes all previous MOUs and any existing data exchanges are adopted under this new MOU.

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 account of 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.*

**CSO-EPA TECHNICAL EXCHANGE PROTOCOL  
In Accordance with Memorandum of Understanding**

**Re: Compilation of the National Atmospheric Inventories**

EPA is responsible for the compilation of the national atmospheric inventory as detailed in Schedule 1 below, and relies on CSO for certain key data.

Specific requirements relating to the provision of data by the CSO for the National Atmospheric Inventories (NAI) relate to:

- (i) the data delivery (see Schedule 2)
- (ii) the required data format (see Schedule 3)
- (iii) the data quality QA/QC (see Schedule 4)
- (iv) data security (see Schedule 5)

The Schedules below provide a baseline for the CSO in the supply of the information for the inclusion in the NAI.

***Schedule 1***

The EPA as the Single National Entity (SNE) has overall responsibility for the delivery of the National Atmospheric Inventory (NAI) and reporting it to the relevant international organisations including the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). In this capacity, the SNE is required to maintain a national system for greenhouse gas inventory data provision, in accordance with Article 5 of the Kyoto Protocol<sup>1</sup> and EU Decision, 280/2004/EC concerning a mechanism for monitoring Community greenhouse gas emissions and for implementing the Kyoto Protocol.

***Schedule 2***

The data specified in Schedule 3 relating to emissions in the previous year will be provided in electronic format to the OCLR of the EPA by 30<sup>th</sup> September of the current year.

***Schedule 3***

Data to be provided by CSO for the purpose of compiling the NAI comprises the following:

- Agricultural activity data (June agricultural survey: animal numbers, hectares of crops cultivated, etc.; December agricultural survey: animal numbers)
- National population & housing statistics: Five-yearly Census of Population data, including housing data; Annual April population estimates, and occasional Labour Force Survey data on housing and households.

***Schedule 4***

An outline of Quality Assurance system and specific data quality checks related to the data provided to the NAI by CSO set out in the Agreement Table below.

***Schedule 5***

The data specified in Schedule 3 is to be provided annually for the duration of the Agreement. Changes to the scope of data provided can be made subject to mutual agreement in writing. Depending on the extent of such changes, the provisions of paragraph 2.4 of this agreement may apply.

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<sup>1</sup> See Decision 20/CP.7 in FCCC/CP/2001/13/Add.3 of the Marrakech Accords

### Agreement Table

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Central Statistics Office (CSO)</b>
<b>Contact</b>	Senior Statistician Environment and Climate Division (co-ordination) Senior Statistician Agriculture Division Senior Statistician Census Management Division Senior Statistician Labour Force Survey Division Senior Statistician Social Analysis Division
<b>Deadline for Data Submission</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> September each year.
<b>Data submitted to the Ireland NAI</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agricultural activity data (June agricultural survey: animal numbers, hectares of crops cultivated, etc.; December agricultural survey: animal numbers);</li> <li>• National population &amp; housing statistics: Five-yearly Census of Population data including housing data;</li> <li>• Annual April population estimates; and</li> <li>• Labour Force Survey data on housing and households.</li> </ul>
<b>Summary of Data: origin, collection, processing, checking prior to submission to EPA.</b>	<p>Agricultural statistics based on the CSO's June and December farm surveys.</p> <p>Five-yearly Census of Population and Housing. The annual April population estimate is updated using administrative data (including births, deaths and migration indicators) and information on population change collected in the Labour Force Survey (LFS).</p> <p>The LFS is a sample survey. The information collected relates to demographic characteristics, labour force participation and other social topics.</p>
<b>Consistency of Estimation methodology</b>	The consistency of estimation methodology is assured by the experience and competence of CSO staff; and by the implementation of statistical methodologies based on best practice.
<b>QA system details: accredited?, Protocols &amp; Guidance</b>	Statistics compiled by the CSO must comply with quality standards set out in a large number of EU Regulations on statistics. In addition, the CSO subscribes to the European Statistics Code of Practice, which sets out key principles to underpin quality in the production of official statistics. The CSO has an internal Quality Assurance / Audit unit, which assists in the coherent implementation of statistical standards by providing guidelines and standards.
<b>Summary of Specific QC</b>	The CSO's internal quality standards and guidelines on statistical processes cover each stage in the statistical "value chain", from sample selection to data collection, data processing, editing, estimation and publication.
<b>Comments on data quality or uncertainty issues</b>	<p>Annual estimates of agricultural activity are subject to revision in the light of results from the 10-yearly Census of Agriculture.</p> <p>The annual population estimates are also subject to revision, when results from the five-yearly Census become available. In general, the resulting revisions are very small.</p> <p>LFS estimates are subject to sampling errors. Details are published in the LFS releases. The effect on estimates at national level is small in relative terms.</p>

***This Agreement comes into effect on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2019  
and replaces all previous agreements on National Atmospheric Inventories***

Approved By:  Gerry Brady, MoU Liaison Officer, CSO



Jonathan Derham, MoU Liaison Officer, EPA

