



An Phríomh-Oifig Staidrimh
Central Statistics Office

information notice

Economic Statistics Review Group

Background

The recent revisions to Ireland's 2015 national accounts and balance of payments statistics highlight the dramatic impact of globalisation on the statistics of an economy such as Ireland's where there is a significant and growing multinational presence.

The results published on July 12th 2016 by the CSO accurately capture the complicated nature of the Irish economy and in this context, the figures are highly relevant. However, because of the open nature of the Irish economy, it is becoming increasingly difficult to represent the complexity of economic activity in Ireland in a single headline indicator such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Ireland's GDP and other related measures can be affected by activities elsewhere in the globe and users of these statistics need improved insight before drawing conclusions about domestic activity.

The reporting of GDP is a requirement under EU legislation and as such, the CSO will continue to produce national accounts and balance of payments statistics, in compliance with the internationally agreed standards. The compilation of national accounts and balance of payments statistics on this basis ensures comparability of the statistics across time and across countries.

While the CSO produces a wide range of economic, business and social indicators, a strategic consultation with national experts and international organisations is now needed to drive developments on indicators and analyses that will better support understanding of the Irish economy and in particular, activity in the domestic economy. The CSO is committed to meeting user needs, and recognising the need for consultation on providing relevant outputs for all users, the CSO is convening the Economic Statistics Review Group. The Group will focus on the statistical needs of national users and will provide guidance to the CSO on the development of a broader or more detailed suite of indicators that give greater insight into economic activity in Ireland.

Terms of Reference

1. The Economic Statistics Review Group will provide direction for the CSO on how best to meet user needs for greater insight into Irish economic activity, taking account of the measurement challenges inherent in providing a comprehensive picture of the highly globalised Irish economy;
2. The work of the Group will be undertaken within the framework of the Statistics Act, 1993 and all discussions and documentation referenced during the process within the Group will remain confidential;
3. The Group will report to the Director General of the CSO;
4. The Group, will meet between September and November 2016, and has agreed a timeline, end December 2016, for the completion of its work and for the submission of a report to the Director General of the CSO;
5. As required under EU legislation, the CSO will continue to produce national accounts and balance of payments statistics in accordance with the international standards. In that context the group will focus on additional measures including:
 - the development and expansion of the existing National Accounts and Balance of Payments frameworks;
 - identification of key CSO indicators where additional detail would provide further insight;
 - the potential need for new indicators - their relevance to the Irish situation but recognising the

need for comparability across countries; and

- new presentations of existing information to improve understanding and insight
6. The recommendations of the Group will balance feasibility and desirability and will cover short- and longer-term initiatives;
 7. To meet requirements for indicators that are consistent over time, the Group will as far as possible take account of the need for stability and repeatability in the recommendations for indicators and analyses. The availability of sustainable and high quality data sources will be critical in this regard;
 8. The schedule of meetings* and the agreed terms of reference for the Group will be published on CSO.IE. The report of the Group, and the CSO's response to the report, will be made public;
 9. The membership of the Group reflects the variety of national stakeholders and along with expertise of the membership, the Group will also benefit from the expertise of international observers from Eurostat and the IMF. The Group members are:
 - Philip Lane (Chair) - Central Bank of Ireland
 - Alan Barrett - Economic and Social Research Institute
 - Seamus Coffey - University College Cork
 - Thomas Conefrey - Irish Fiscal Advisory Council
 - John Fitzgerald - Trinity College Dublin, Irish Times
 - John McCarthy - Department of Finance
 - Dan O'Brien - Institute of International and European Affairs in Dublin, Irish Independent
 - Fergal O'Brien - IBEC
 - Frances Ruane - Trinity College Dublin, European Statistical Advisory Committee
 - Marie Sherlock - SIPTU
 - Rossa White - National Treasury Management Agency
 - Jennifer Banim and Michael Connolly - Central Statistics Office
 - Eurostat and IMF - International observers
 10. The secretariat for the Group will be provided by the CSO and to facilitate the international observers, meetings of the Group may be carried out by video conference.

Communications

With the involvement of the Group, the CSO proposes to hold a seminar in early 2017 to highlight and communicate the discussions and the recommendations of the Group. The seminar will be an opportunity for a broad engagement with all users of statistics – public, analysts, commentators and international organisations – with a focus on the measurement challenges caused by globalisation.

The CSO is involved in international groups discussing and overseeing the challenges posed by globalisation and the decisions on changes to the standards needed to best meet these measurement challenges. The work of the Economic Statistics Review Group will direct and inform the CSO's input and communications with these groups.

*** Schedule of meetings**

September 19th

October 3rd

October 17th

November 1st

November 15th

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