

Office for Statistics Regulation: Priorities for the 2018/19 Regulatory Work Programme

GLA Economics consultation response

February 2018

GLA Economics (GLAE) welcomes this opportunity to provide our views on the UK Statistics Authority's 2018/19 Regulatory Work Programme priorities. Official statistics datasets all help to inform GLA decision making and planning and it is of huge importance that their production and publication is safeguarded effectively.

Section 1: For information: Live projects continuing into 2018/19

GLAE welcomes the UK Statistics Authority's continued commitment towards the assessment of regional GVA statistics and measurement of the modern economy. Regional economic statistics are highly valuable to GLAE, and it is important that the ONS continues to produce trustworthy and high-quality statistics at this level. The ongoing development of regional statistics is particularly important given the historic lack of timely data, and longer time series', at this level. For instance, the lack of timely regional GVA data means that official estimates of the size of the output of London's economy can be up to nearly two years out of date. This lack of timely data was particularly troubling during the 2008/09 recession, where analysis of the regional impact of the recession was hindered by a lack of timely, relevant official regional statistics. We welcome the fact that ONS has reduced the lag in the publication of these statistics, and their continued work to reduce this further. However, there are still improvements to be made on the timeliness of this data set, and GLAE would encourage the ONS to pursue similar programmes of improvement across other regional data series.

GLAE also welcomes the continued focus on UK trade statistics, but would also like to use this consultation as an opportunity to encourage the UK Statistics Authority's support for the ongoing ONS development of these statistics at the regional level.

Section 2: Potential priorities for 2018/19: we welcome your views

The following table outlines GLAE's views on the UK Statistics Authority's proposed priorities:

Theme	Project	Geographical Coverage	Type	Your views: Please offer comments on whether you agree (or not) with these proposed priorities for your areas of interest. Please offer any immediate views on important considerations for the scope of the proposed projects
Cross-Cutting	<p>Public value of statistics to understand inequalities: We have various examples where users have identified that statistics are poorly serving people within certain groups due to inadequate collection and/or analysis by race, gender, disability or other factors. This can lead to a failure to identify important issues in public policy and practice. We are interested to further explore this issue. In parallel with our thinking, ONS has launched an ‘audit of inequalities data’ seeking feedback initially from across the Government Statistical Service and so our intention is to engage with this process and develop any plans in light of this. Any feedback from consultees on what we might usefully prioritise in this area would be particularly welcome.</p>	UK	Systemic Review	<p>GLAE welcomes the UKSA’s renewed commitment to improving the value of statistics that relate to inequality and would like to stress the importance of data collected by race, gender, disability, and other factors relating to inequality at the regional level also. This is an area in which we are more and more frequently being asked to provide analysis, and any additional data at regional and lower level geographies would be hugely welcome. Ensuring sufficiently robust NUTS1 estimates is vital to enable these more detailed breakdowns. We are particularly interested to see the results of the ‘audit of inequalities data’ and understand how this data can be better used to inform policy. Further, we believe the systemic review of these statistics should be a high priority for the UKSA.</p>
	<p>Public value of statistics to understand experiences of those at different ages: We have various examples where users have identified that statistics in different thematic</p>	UK	Systemic Review	<p>Statistics broken down by ages is highly valuable to GLAE, particularly at the regional level. Accurate and timely breakdowns by age bands helps us to better understand the trends and needs</p>

	<p>areas are poorly serving children and/ or older people and we are interested to further explore this issue. We could focus on one or other population group or look at both if there seemed to be an underlying systemic issue common to the two. Any views from consultees on what we might usefully do in this area would be particularly welcome as we consider it further during this year.</p>			<p>of London's population, and design the most appropriate policy.</p>
<p>Agriculture and Environment</p>	<p>The public value of statistics on the green economy: this project would explore the availability and coherence of official statistics on sustainable development and resource efficiency and the extent to which they meet user needs.</p>	UK	Systemic Review	<p>Sustainability and the green economy is another area in which GLAE is increasingly asked to provide analysis. GLAE believes that coherent official statistics on sustainable development and resource efficiency at the regional level is hugely important and that demand for clearly and consistently defined, high quality statistics in this area will only increase. A systemic review of these statistics is therefore welcome and GLAE believes should be prioritized.</p>
	<p>Air Quality Statistics in the UK and Emissions of Air Pollutants in the UK statistics (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs)</p>	UK	Assessment	<p>GLAE welcomes an assessment of air quality statistics but would like to see them broken down to the regional level in the future.</p>
	<p>UK Sea Fisheries statistics (Marine Management Organisation)</p>	UK	Compliance Check	NC
	<p>Scottish Sea Fisheries statistics (Scottish Government)</p>	Scotland	Compliance Check	NC
	<p>Final Results of June Agricultural Census</p>	NI	Compliance Check	NC

	(Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs)			
	Results of the December Agricultural Survey (Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs)	NI	Compliance Check	NC
	Statistical Review of Northern Ireland Agriculture (Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs)	NI	Compliance Check	NC
	Results from the June Agricultural Census (Scottish Government)	Scotland	Compliance Check	NC
	Results from the December Agricultural Survey (Scottish Government)	Scotland	Compliance Check	NC
	Agriculture Facts and Figures (Scottish Government)	Scotland	Compliance Check	NC
	Survey of Agriculture and Horticulture (Welsh Government)	Wales	Compliance Check	NC
	Welsh Agricultural Statistics (Welsh Government)	Wales	Compliance Check	NC
Business, Industry, Trade and Energy	Business Investment (Office for National Statistics): carried forwards from 2017/18 programme	UK	Compliance Check	GLAE welcomes a compliance check of these statistics but would like to see these broken down to the regional level by sector.
	Capital Stocks (Office for National Statistics)	UK	Compliance Check	NC
	UK Gross Domestic Expenditure on Research and Development (Office for National Statistics)	UK	Compliance Check	GLAE welcomes a compliance check of these statistics but would like to see these broken down to the regional level in the future.

Children, Education and Skills	Public value of UK statistics on post-school education and skills: This project would explore the provision and suitability of data and statistics to support the development and evaluation of current and future policies, in further education, apprenticeships and life-long learning across the UK	UK	Systemic Review	With the recent devolution of skills funding to London, regional statistics on post-school education and skills are particularly valuable to GLAE and we therefore welcome a systemic review in this area. Data on adult education and skills must be made more available at the regional level, and in a timely manner, to ensure the most efficient use of these additional monies. Access to these data is also of concern. For example, having full access to the ILR would be hugely beneficial in informing our policy design but at present, an application is required for each individual project which is time consuming and inefficient. GLAE asks that the UKSA considers what recommendations could be made to improve the range and quality of data we have in this area, as well as ease of access.
	Permanent and Fixed-Period Exclusions statistics (using Reproducible Analytical Pipeline) (Department for Education)	England	Compliance Check	NC
	Further Education and Skills statistics (Department for Education)	England	Compliance Check	A compliance check of these statistics is welcome.
	Children in Need statistics (Department for Education)	England	Compliance Check	A compliance check of these statistics is welcome.
	Statistics on Vocational and Other Qualifications (quarterly statistics) (Ofqual)	UK	Compliance Check	A compliance check of these statistics is welcome.

	Higher Education statistics (Higher Education Statistics Agency)	UK	Compliance Check	A compliance check of these statistics is welcome.
	Statistics on Year 12 and 14 examination performance at post-primary schools in Northern Ireland (Department of Education)	NI	Compliance Check	NC
	School's Examination Results statistics (Welsh Government)	Wales	Compliance Check	NC
Crime and Justice	The public value of policing statistics: This project would review statistics and data about police and policing across the UK. This review completes our system wide look at statistics on crime and justice and is one that stakeholders have said they are keen for us to cover.	UK	Systemic Review	GLAE would like to stress the importance of these data at the regional level also. Alongside inequalities data, reliable regional crime statistics are useful for our social integration work programme and further access to these statistics would be desirable.
	Northern Ireland Crime Survey (Department of Justice): carried forwards from 2017/18 programme	NI	Assessment (building on Compliance Checks)	NC
	Violence at work: findings from Crime Survey for England and Wales (Health and Safety Executive)	England and Wales	Compliance Check	A compliance check of these statistics is welcome.
	Civil Justice statistics quarterly (Ministry of Justice)	England and Wales	Compliance Check	A compliance check of these statistics is welcome.
	Criminal Court statistics (quarterly) (Ministry of Justice)	England and Wales	Compliance Check	A compliance check of these statistics is welcome.
	Criminal Justice System statistics (quarterly) (Ministry of Justice)	England and Wales	Compliance Check	A compliance check of these statistics is welcome.

	Family Court statistics (quarterly) (Ministry of Justice)	England and Wales	Compliance Check	A compliance check of these statistics is welcome.
	Prison Population projections (Ministry of Justice)	England and Wales	Compliance Check	A compliance check of these statistics is welcome.
	Northern Ireland Prosecutions and Convictions Statistics (Department of Justice)	Northern Ireland	Compliance Check	NC
	Criminal Proceedings in Scotland (Scottish Government)	Scotland	Compliance Check	NC
Culture and Identity	Internet Access - Households and Individuals (Office for National Statistics)	GB	Compliance Check	A compliance check of these statistics is welcome.
Economy	Measuring Tax Gaps (HM Revenue & Customs)	UK	Assessment	An assessment of Measuring Tax Gaps is welcome.
	Country and Regional Analysis: Statistical estimates for the allocation of identifiable expenditure between the UK countries and 9 English regions (HM Treasury)	UK countries and regions	Assessment	High quality regional data is hugely important to GLAE and we would like to see an assessment of Country and Regional Analysis prioritized within the UKSA's work programme.
	Public value of statistics on public finances in a devolved UK: We are aware of various issues related to the Scottish fiscal framework including Barnett consequentials, and related to investment including the asset and debt position - across all the devolved nations. We envisage doing work to explore some of these issues further and would welcome views on what our priorities should be; we are awaiting publication of the Economic Data report from the Scottish	UK, Scotland and UK regions	Systemic Review	GLAE supports the work to better understand the public value of statistics on public finances in a devolved UK, and would encourage the UKSA to include London within any analysis.

	Parliament's Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee which may give some steers.			
	Foreign Direct Investment (Office for National Statistics)	UK	Compliance Check	A compliance check of these statistics is welcome.
	Public Service Productivity estimates (Office for National Statistics)	UK	Compliance Check	A compliance check of these statistics is welcome.
Health and Social Care	National Diet and Nutrition Survey (Public Health England)	UK	Assessment	NC
	Health and Care statistics: a small programme of (approximately 12) compliance checks – key priorities for the programme will be determined based on intelligence from the Health and Care Systemic Review and engagement with users; suggestions at present include health and social care workforce statistics	UK	Compliance Checks	A compliance check of these statistics is welcome but additional data at lower level geographies (to LSOA) would be particularly welcome. Health inequalities can vary dramatically, even within a borough, and access to these data would have significant additional public value.
	Public value of Social Care statistics in Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland. This project would explore the ability of the statistics available to meet users' needs in this area. The statistics in England are covered by the existing Health and Social care statistics work in England, but given different contexts across the Devolved Administrations, there may well be useful learning to be shared across the UK.	Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland	Systemic Review	NC

Housing, Planning and Local Services	Index of Private Housing Rental Prices (IPHRP) in Great Britain (Office for National Statistics)	GB	Assessment	An assessment of these statistics is welcome.
	Northern Ireland Planning statistics (Department for Infrastructure): carried forwards from 2017/18 programme	NI	Assessment	NC
	Housing statistics: a programme of (at least ten) compliance checks with a focus on the Quality pillar: key priorities will be determined based on intelligence from the Public Value of Statistics on Housing and Planning Systemic Review	England, Scotland, Wales, NI	Compliance Checks	Housing statistics are used widely within GLA planning, and a programme of compliance checks of these statistics is therefore welcome.
Labour Market and Welfare	Northern Ireland Civil Service Sickness Absence statistics (Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency)	NI	Assessment	NC
	Effects of Taxes and Benefits on UK Household Income (Office for National Statistics)	UK	Compliance Check	A compliance check of these statistics is welcome.
	Universal Credit (Department for Work and Pensions)	UK	Compliance Check	A compliance check of these statistics is welcome. Given the recent changes to UC, GLAE believes ensuring these statistics are of the highest quality is particularly important. We would like to see more analysis at the regional level. The GLA's response to the UC experimental statistics consultation is available here . The GLA, among other local authorities, believes that consultation has so far been inadequate which has been raised at CLiP meetings. GLAE is concerned about the consistency of reporting of series such as the

				claimant count, and the range of information available to meet legal requirements.
	Benefit Cap statistics (Department for Work and Pensions): carried forwards from 2017/18 programme	UK	Compliance Check	A compliance check of these statistics is also welcome.
Population	Population Projections (Office for National Statistics)	UK	Compliance Check	A compliance check of these statistics is welcome. We would like to see more analysis at the regional level.
	Population Estimates (Office for National Statistics)	UK	Assessment	An assessment of these statistics is welcome. We would also like to see more analysis at the regional level.
	Statistics within the Population theme with administrative data sources: a programme of (at least six) compliance checks with a focus on the Quality pillar	UK	Compliance Checks	The GLA is a heavy user of population statistics which inform many of our planning and policy decisions. Reliable admin data is an important issue for GLAE, and greater access to these data would be of great use. A compliance check of these statistics is therefore welcome. We would also like to see more analysis at the regional level.
Security, Defence and International Relations	Defence Health and Safety statistics (Ministry of Defence)	UK	Compliance Check	NC
	Provisional UK official development assistance as a proportion of gross national income (Department for International Development)	UK	Compliance Check	NC
Travel, Transport and Tourism	National Rail Passenger Survey (Transport Focus)	GB	Assessment	Travel, transport and tourism are all vital components of London's economy, and statistics in these areas are very important to the

				GLA planning and policy work. An assessment of the National Rail Passenger Survey is very welcome and we would encourage the UKSA to consider how these data may be used by the UK regions when making this assessment.
	Road Accidents and Safety statistics (Department for Transport)	GB	Compliance Check	NC
	Overseas Travel and Tourism (Office for National Statistics): Carried forwards from 2017/18 programme	UK	Compliance Check	These data are used heavily by the GLA and we therefore welcome a compliance check of these statistics. Again, we would encourage the UKSA to consider how these data may be used by the UK regions when undertaking this check. For example, the regional level data is published annually, whereas country level estimates are available quarterly; it would be useful to have regional estimates published as frequently as the country level estimates.

Section 3: Your proposals

GLAE would welcome a greater focus on regional economic statistics at all levels. In particular, as we have highlighted in our responses to a number of consultations by various Government and other agencies, GLAE has long running concerns about the quality and the detail of regional statistics, as well as the time lags currently involved in their production. The lack of a regional breakdown or a regional version of a broad number of UK-wide statistics has hindered analysis of London's economy both within the GLA and by the national government, which given the size of London's economy (representing over 20 per cent of the UK's total output) is detrimental to a detailed analysis and understanding of the UK's economy as a whole. Further, where this data is scarce but is also highly needed has led to considerable time and resources being applied to overcome these short comings.

As the UK devolves more power to different regions/cities, there is an increasing argument to reverse the trend of cutting sample sizes/data collections, and provide the more finely-grained breakdown of the UK that is increasingly required for place-based policy making and analyses.

For cities, the ONS should address those issues faced by city authorities, in needing access to more disclosive datasets. Recent legislation (such as the Digital Economy Bill) has not yet gone far enough to improve this. The National Statistician has said that more could be done to help bodies like the GLA.

GLAE is also concerned about the development of the statistical business register. While we believe this is a positive development, and hope it will allow us to make more effective use of admin data to better understand the characteristics and number of businesses in the UK, we are concerned that it will create a discontinuity on jobs series, which will be important to be able to quantify by geography and industrial classification. While the ONS will update the national level workforce jobs series, the regional jobs series only goes back to 1996; there will likely be significant consequential impacts for GLAE on the GLA London jobs series, which goes back to 1971 for London, sector, and borough jobs, as well as borough by sector series, and more detailed jobs series. The recent extension of IDBR to include VAT and non-PAYE businesses has been quite minor in comparison, but has also caused significant difficulties in maintaining the London jobs series. We would like the UKSA to help ensure the ONS has adequate plans to maintain continuity with existing series and engage with stakeholders, as well as give consideration to whether the ONS should be producing these series in the future.

GLAE would finally like the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) to explore the ways in which statistics and data can be made available, and to better monitor the impact of this. One example is under the theme of welfare reform. There are insufficient statistics from DWP to allow us to monitor this in London, partly due to way in which Universal Credit is implemented, but also in their refusal to share data on benefits flows. A lack of access to administrative data sources generally, hinders the work of the GLA, and leads to poorer decision making and policy design.

Section 4: Expressions of interest to engage with us on any of our proposed projects

GLAE would welcome further engagement on any of the proposals for which we have provided comment above.

Section 5: Contact details

Name: Emma Christie

Organisation: Greater London Authority

Email: emma.christie@london.gov.uk

Telephone: 020 7983 4496

For more information please contact GLA Economics, GLA Economics
Greater London Authority, City Hall, The Queen's Walk, More London, London SE1 2AA
Tel: 020 7983 4496 e-mail: emma.christie@london.gov.uk