

**BERR** | Department for Business  
Enterprise & Regulatory Reform

**CONSULTATION ON 'REGIONAL  
COMPETITIVENESS & STATE OF  
THE REGIONS'**

A National Statistics Consultation

SEPTEMBER 2008



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## **Contents**

Introduction	3
How to respond	4
The purpose of the publication and the REP PSA 7 Indicator Web site	7
Summary of questions	9
Annex Regional Indicators provided in 'Regional Competitiveness & State of the Regions'	11

## **Introduction**

The web publication 'Regional Competitiveness & State of the Regions' (RCSOR) provides information covering 17 socio-economic indicators covering the nine English regions, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The main aim of the publication is to provide regional statistical information to regional bodies and the devolved administrations to enable them to develop and monitor their own economic strategies. The indicators shown in 'Regional Competitiveness & State of the Regions' are not performance indicators, but have been designed to enable regional comparisons, whilst time series can be used to investigate change over time. 'Regional Competitiveness & State of the Regions' is a compendium publication, containing regional information sourced from several different government departments, agencies and academic organisations.

Given that the seventh edition of the publication was released in May 2008, it is important that the Department ensures that the publication continues to provide the range of regional statistics required by its readers.

The purpose of this National Statistics Consultation is to determine if readers continue to find all or part of the publication useful, for example that the regional statistics are used by regional bodies for a specific business need, including the formulation and monitoring of economic strategies. The consultation also asks for feedback and suggestions on how it can be improved. It also asks for views on the relationship with the REP PSA website. Further information on how to respond to the consultation is provided in the next section of this document.

## **How to respond**

This consultation, which was launched on 9 September 2008, asks for responses to be submitted by 1 December 2008.

When responding, please state whether you are an individual or representing the views of an organisation. If responding on behalf of an organisation, please make it clear who the organisation represents and, where applicable, how the views of members were assembled.

Responses to the consultation can be submitted by letter, fax or e-mail to:

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Bay 615  
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London  
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## **Confidentiality & Data Protection**

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or release to other parties or to disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004). If you want information, including personal data that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence.

In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

## **Help with queries**

Questions about any statistical issues raised in the document can be addressed to:

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If you have comments or complaints about the way this consultation has been conducted, these should be sent to:

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A copy of the Code of Practice on Consultation is available from the link below:

[www.berr.gov.uk/files/file47158.pdf](http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file47158.pdf)

## **The purpose of the publication and the REP PSA 7 indicator web site**

'Regional Competitiveness & State of the Regions' was first published in 2002 and formed by the amalgamation of two separate publications: the 'Regional Competitiveness Indicators' and the Regional Development Agency (RDA) 'State of the Region' Core Indicators. In addition to these two publications a number of other changes were introduced including work undertaken by consultants SQW and Oxford Economic Forecasting, who recommended the inclusion of 11 core indicators for RDA Evaluation and Performance Monitoring. There was a consultation exercise held in the winter of 2001/02, with the first edition of RCSOR following in 2002. The publication provides 17 indicators, divided into five different groups or sections covering overall competitiveness, labour markets, deprivation, business development and land and infrastructure.

'Regional Competitiveness & State of the Regions' is a National Statistics publication, though some of the indicators listed within the publication are not National Statistics in their own right. Indicators that are not National Statistics *may* be of lower inherent quality but this is not necessarily the case; it may simply be that they have not been through the assessment process that is required to attain National Statistics status.

The latest (2008) edition of the publication is accessible using the following link:

<http://stats.berr.gov.uk/uksa/rcsor/sa20080530.htm>

### **Regional Economic Performance Web site**

In addition to 'Regional Competitiveness & State of the Regions', BERR is the lead department for the Regional Economic Performance PSA 7 target, the overall objective of which is to "improve the economic performance of all English regions and reduce the gap in economic growth rates between regions". Further background information is also available from the REP PSA7 delivery agreement paper, which is accessible via the link provided below:

[http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/5/E/pbr\\_csr07\\_psa7.pdf](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/5/E/pbr_csr07_psa7.pdf)

In support of this objective, BERR has a REP PSA website containing relevant regional socio-economic statistics. This can be accessed via the link provided below:

<http://stats.berr.gov.uk/reppsa2>

The PSA 7 target indicators have a more tightly defined purpose than 'Regional Competitiveness & State of the Regions'. For example, it is restricted to the areas covered by the REP PSA target, namely the English regions. Although there is overlap between the two sources, the REP PSA website contains a narrower range of indicators. On the other hand, it is updated regularly with the latest data, unlike, 'Regional Competitiveness & State of the Regions', which is updated annually.

For more information on the individual indicators included in the two data sources, including whether they have National Statistics status, please refer to the Annex of this consultation.

## Summary of questions

BERR would welcome any feedback from readers of the publication, including any comments on the usefulness of the publication and how it could be improved. In addition to more general comments, BERR would also welcome responses from readers on the following questions below:

- Should the regional statistics contained within 'Regional Competitiveness & State of the Regions' be cut back so as to focus on the indicators listed within the Regional Economic Performance PSA 7 target? For example should indicators which are less obviously related, such as industrial property and office rental costs and the reuse of vacant and derelict land be considered for removal from the publication?
- Alternatively, are there additional indicators which could usefully be included<sup>1</sup>?
- Does the commentary of 'Regional Competitiveness & State of the Regions' add much value to the publication? Would resources be better devoted to more Charts, for example?
- As fresh data becomes available throughout the year, some elements of RCSOR can become out of date very quickly. Should the set of tables be updated more frequently? If so, is it acceptable to update the tables without updating the commentary (which is more resource-intensive)?
- Would the inclusion of additional derived groups of regions, such as those used in the Regional Economic Performance PSA Indicators be useful? The aggregations used there split England into (i) North, Midlands and West and (ii) Greater South East, though other combinations may also be of potential interest.
- Should the name of the publication be changed? It has been suggested for example that this could be shortened to 'Regional Economic Performance Indicators'.

More fundamentally, there are two forms of dissemination which have similar but not identical aims and coverage, RCSOR and the REP PSA website. Are both required? For example, would it be sensible to expand the REP PSA website to replace the key elements of RCSOR? The answer to this question may depend on the answers to some of the questions specifically posed above on RCSOR itself. There are however substantial differences at the moment between the two sources:-

- RCSOR is static, updated once a year. REP PSA website is dynamic, updated as and when new data become available;
- RCSOR has commentary. REP PSA website does not.

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that data availability or quality issues may prevent inclusion of even the most desirable indicators. This can also affect existing indicators; for example regional capital expenditure figures from the Annual Business Inquiry are no longer considered to be of acceptable quality and are unlikely to be made available by ONS unless quality improves again.

- REP PSA website has a narrower focus, being linked specifically to the REP PSA targets;
- REP PSA website is restricted to English regions. Most RCSOR tables also cover Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- REP PSA website includes some figures for Greater South East and North/Midlands/West. RCSOR does not.

**Annex - Regional Indicators provided in 'Regional Competitiveness & State of the Regions' and the REP PSA Indicator web site**

<b>Regional Indicator</b>	<b>Data supplier for the regional indicator</b>	<b>If Indicator(s) is listed in 'Regional Competitiveness &amp; State of the Regions'</b>	<b>Table number(s) in 'Regional Competitiveness &amp; State of the Regions'</b>	<b>If Indicator(s) is provided as part of the Regional Economic Performance (REP PSA target 7 indicator)</b>	<b>Table number(s) in Regional Economic Performance (REP PSA target 7 indicator)</b>	<b>Confirm if the regional indicator has National Statistic status</b>
Globalisation: regional GVA relative to EU average (using purchasing power parity)	Eursostat / Office for National Statistics	No	NA	Yes	A1b	No
Workplace based gross value added and gross disposable income per head	Office for National Statistics	Yes	1(a), 1(b)	Yes	A1e, A1f	Yes
Residence based gross value added	Office for National Statistics	No	NA	Yes	A1c, A1d	Yes
Real GVA per head growth rates	Office for National Statistics	No	NA	Yes	A1a	Yes

Labour productivity	Office for National Statistics	Yes	2(a), 2(b)	Yes	A1g, A1h	Mixed
Investment and output by UK and foreign-owned companies	Office for National Statistics	Yes	3(a), 3(b), 3(c)	Yes	B1, B2, B3, B4	No
Export of goods and services	HM Revenue and Customs / Department for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform	Yes	4(a), 4(b), 4(c), 4(d)	Yes	F1	Yes
Earnings	Office for National Statistics	Yes	5(a), 5(b), 5(c)	No	NA	Yes
Employment	Office for National Statistics	Yes	6(a), 6(b), 6(c)	Yes	G1a	Yes
Unemployment	Office for National Statistics	Yes	7	Yes	G1b	Yes
Claimant count	Department for Work and Pensions	Yes	8(a), 8(b)	No	NA	Yes

Educational and vocation attainment	Department for Innovation, Universities and Science	Yes	9(a), 9(b), 9(c)	Yes	D1, D2, D3	Yes
Income support	Department for Work and Pensions	Yes	10(a), 10(b), 10(c), 10(d), 10(e)	No	NA	Yes
Income deprivation	Department for Communities and Local Government	Yes	11	No	NA	No
Business registrations and survival rates	Department for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform	Yes	12(a), 12(b), 12(c)	Yes	E2	Mixed
Total entrepreneurial activity	Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, London Business School	Yes	13(a), 13(b)	Yes	E1	No
Research & development, and employment in high and medium-high technology industries	Department for Innovation, Universities and Science	Yes	14(a), 14(b), 14(c), 14(d), 14(e)	Yes	C1, C2, C3	Mixed

Transport	Department for Transport	Yes	15(a), 15(b), 15(c)	No	NA	Yes
Industrial property and office rental costs	Valuation Office, HM Revenue & Customs	Yes	16(a), 16(b)	No	NA	No
Re-use of vacant and derelict land	Department for Communities and Local Government	Yes	17	No	NA	No



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