

Background Quality Report

UK Defence Statistics Compendium: Chapter 7

Sustainable development, Military Aid to the Civil Authorities and Conflict Prevention

1. Introduction

Overview

Chapter 7 of UKDS has three sections on sustainable development (7.1 to 7.5), on Military Aid to the Civil Authorities (7.6 and 7.7) and on Conflict Prevention Activities (7.8). Sustainable development tables give a time series of statistics on waste arising, carbon dioxide emissions, MOD energy and water consumption and the condition of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). Under Military Aid there is a table about Fisheries Protection activity and a table showing examples of assistance to the civil community. The final table shows examples of activities undertaken in 2010/11 by MOD in support to the UK's Conflict Prevention initiative.

DASA has published statistics on defence energy consumption, on fishery protection, on military aid to civil ministries during industrial disputes (and on Armed Forces and security in Northern Ireland) since 1992. However it was not until UKDS 2009 that Chapter 7 first appeared in its current form, when a new section on sustainable development was introduced, and following consultation, the section on Northern Ireland removed.

Methodology and Production

Data are received annually from data suppliers from

- Safety, Sustainable Development and Continuity Division (Tables 7.1 and 7.2),
- Defence Infrastructure Organisation (Tables 7.3 to 7.5)
- MOD (Tables 7.6 to 7.8).

The data suppliers complete standard templates for each Table using data that are derived from their administrative systems. Most of the Tables provide a time series of statistics, typically from 2005/06 to 2010/11. The exceptions to this are Tables 7.7 and 7.8 which provide examples of assistance at specific dates.

All the Tables are checked for any obvious anomalies, but DASA cannot make an authoritative independent assessment of the data or their quality.

Definitions and explanations of the terminology used are provided in the Chapter. There are notes on the measurement of carbon dioxide emissions which precede the Table about this. Tables 7.1 to 7.5 are not National Statistics due to concerns over accuracy, validation and comparability. This is stated explicitly in the chapter. DASA are currently in discussion with the UK Statistics Authority on whether the remaining three tables in this chapter should be classified as National Statistics.

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DASA welcome feedback on this Background Quality Report or any of the statistics mentioned.

2. Relevance

The main users of these tables are those interested in the content of the tables: sustainable development, fisheries protection and MOD support. While internal systems may be sufficient for internal use, publication in UKDS makes this information available publicly, regularly and as a time series. The Tables include definitions and other information so that the data are set in context and can be understood by a lay audience as well as those with professional interests.

The Tables also provide evidence for monitoring the MOD's performance against sustainable development targets. This is of interest generally in terms of policy effectiveness and the use of public funds, but may be of particular interest to those concerned with green issues.

3. Accuracy

The statistics are drawn from MOD administrative data systems and provided to DASA.

Although the data for the Tables on sustainable development (notably Tables 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3) should cover the period 2005/06 to 2010/07 there are many missing entries (data not available), which affects both the statistics themselves and their usefulness to monitor the achievement of targets. This year we were given figures for 2010/11 for some tables, and then they were later withdrawn as not being correct.

4. Timeliness and Punctuality

Publication dates for UKDS as a whole are agreed up to 12 months in advance and are published on the [Publication Release Dates](#)¹ section of [DASA website](#)² and on the [National Statistics Publication Hub](#)³. These statistics are published by DASA only in UKDS, and each year the tables are updated to include the latest annual data. The timetable for the publication of these statistics is thus driven by the timetable for UKDS as a whole. Given that the statistics here relate to financial years, the UKDS timetable allows inclusion of the latest year's information. As this chapter is a relatively small component of UKDS and the statistics are published annually, the loss of any timeliness is thought to be outweighed by the benefits of publication in a compendium like UKDS.

5. Accessibility and Clarity

UKDS is published on [DASA website](#)². Individual Chapters are available as pdfs, with individual tables also available as web pages. The data underpinning the tables are also available as an Excel file.

A search of terms such as "sustainable development", "emissions", "assistance", "protection" or "recycle" on [DASA website](#)² will bring up links to relevant Tables in chapter 7, and to further Tables that might be of interest.

The introduction to this Chapter falls into three parts: sustainable development, military aid to the Civil Authorities and Conflict Prevention activities. For sustainable development the contents of the tables are explained, there is information on sustainable development in Defence, the targets for this and its importance, together with links to relevant websites. A further page of notes explains the way carbon dioxide emissions are calculated. The remainder of the introduction explains the background to the remaining Tables and their content.

The commentary throughout the Chapter draws out key points from the data and explains definitions. Within the Tables there are further notes that clarify definitions or explain changes since previous years.

6. Coherence and Comparability

The tables in this Chapter on sustainable development cover the years 2005/06 to 2010/11, providing a six-year time series. However, there are many places where the data are unavailable and this restricts the usefulness and length of the time series. There are also breaks in series in Tables 7.1 and 7.2. Although the tables contain information on targets the targets themselves run for different periods, and can be difficult to monitor in terms of the statistics provided. These factors suggest that coherence and comparability are poor for these tables.

The form of the data on sustainable development allows users to make comparisons (eg. international comparisons, comparisons to other departments or sectors) themselves.

The Fishery Protection statistics (Table 7.6) cover only boardings (and convictions arising) made by RN Fishery Protection Squadron, who operate under contract to the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). Boardings carried out by the Scottish Executive Environment Directive and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for Northern Ireland are not included. This is thus a partial picture of both boardings and convictions. It also excludes the sea areas of the Faeroes, Rockall and west of Scotland. The statistics are given for 2000/01 and from 2005/06 to 2010/11 providing a six-year time series, and the reason for the break in series for convictions in 2008/09 is clearly explained.

7. Trade-offs between Output Quality Components

None identified.

8. Assessment of User Needs and Perceptions

DASA holds regular consultation meetings with both internal and external users of UKDS, which provide a forum for user feedback on their needs and perceptions. However, it is to identify users of Chapter 7 to invite to these meetings. Another measure of user needs is the less formal evidence from customer queries to the editor of UKDS.

Analysis of hit rates on the external UKDS website shows that between September 2010 and April 2011 there were typically between 200 and 300 hits per month on Chapter 7 of UKDS. This shows that there is a relatively high level of use. In addition DASA actively encourages feedback from users via a link on each publication and a "pop up" survey questionnaire – very little feedback relating to UKDS Chapter 7 has been received through these mechanisms.

9. Performance, Cost and Respondent Burden

The outputs are produced from the administrative data provided by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation and other parts of MOD. The benefit of DASA publishing these statistics is that these administrative data are placed in the public domain, and - though they are not National Statistics - in an analogous way that ensures their independence from political interference and adherence to quality standards. The small burden that this places on the data suppliers is considered to be worthwhile to achieve this, and the consequent public accountability provided by their publication.

10. Confidentiality, Transparency and Security

UKDS Chapter 7 does not contain any identifiable personal data.

All staff involved in the production process have signed the Data Protection Act, and all MoD, Civil Service and data protection regulations are adhered to. All data is stored, accessed and analysed using the MoD's restricted network and IT systems.

We adhere to the principles and protocols laid out in the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#)⁴ and comply with pre-release access arrangements. The [DASA Pre-Release Access lists](#)⁵ are available on the DASA website. This Chapter is subject to the pre-release access arrangements for UKDS as a whole.

11. References

	Reference	Website Location
1	Publication Release Dates	http://www.dasa.mod.uk/applications/newWeb/www/index.php?page=68
2	DASA website	http://www.dasa.mod.uk
3	National Statistics Publication Hub	http://www.statistics.gov.uk/hub/index.html
4	Code of Practice for Official Statistics	http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/code-of-practice-for-official-statistics.pdf
5	DASA Pre-Release Access lists	DASA Pre-Release Access lists

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