

## DECC report on surveys of business in 2011/12

### Introduction

All survey activities in the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) are monitored by DECC's Survey Control Unit (SCU). Burdens imposed by surveys on respondents are measured in terms of compliance costs. In 2011/12 DECC imposed a burden of £137,000 on our data respondents, up 7 per cent on 2010/11 as a result of ad-hoc surveys. Despite this increase, DECC is likely to account for ½ per cent of the survey burden imposed by Government on business.

The SCU in DECC is responsible for compiling and reporting on the compliance costs of all its business surveys to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), which are then published in the annual Government Statistical Service (GSS) report available at [www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/all-releases.html?definition=tcm%3A77-210555](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/all-releases.html?definition=tcm%3A77-210555). The SCU at ONS is responsible for implementing the Prime Minister's instructions ([www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/quality/survey-control/index.html](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/quality/survey-control/index.html)) and for auditing DECC survey control procedures.

This article presents an overview of the survey activities of businesses in DECC in 2011/12 and their compliance costs.

### Survey control in DECC

Survey control is applied to all statistical surveys of businesses, conducted by or on behalf of the department. Survey control is the mechanism for the department to oversee the burden of its surveys imposed on businesses, aiming to promote good survey practice, prevent poor quality or unnecessary surveys, and minimise the burden on respondents to DECC's statistical surveys.

DECC is committed to minimising the burden its surveys place on businesses. When a new survey is proposed, DECC assesses its need at the outset by seeking to understand

- How the information collected will be used;
- What the compliance costs will be;
- How the survey will contribute towards achieving DECC priorities, and
- Whether there are alternative ways to obtain the data.

DECC maintains an inventory of all statistical surveys, ensures that these are systematically reviewed, and annually assesses the compliance costs of running the surveys.

### Data collection

Energy statistics are based on regular surveys of companies and from administration data which, by commodity are as follows:

**Coal** : From the Coal Authority, Iron and Steel Statistics Bureau (ISSB) and electricity generators' returns, coal companies and distributors.

**Upstream oil and gas**: From individual companies under the Downstream Oil Reporting System (DORS) and the Petroleum Production Reporting System (PPRS) administration system.

**Downstream oil and gas** : From National Grid and pipeline operators, gas suppliers and Major Power Producers for electricity generation.

**Electricity**: From inquiries to companies covering generating capacity, fuel use, generation, sales and distribution of electricity and licensed suppliers, ISSB, autogenerators or autoproducers from ONS.

**Renewables** : From Renewable Energy STATisticS database (RESTATS), in addition to coverage from surveys of electricity generators.

## Special feature – Survey control in DECC

**Prices** : From energy suppliers and from manufacturing companies.

Copies of the survey questionnaires are available on the DECC website at:  
[www.decc.gov.uk/media/viewfile.ashx?filetype=4&filepath=11/stats/governance/3808-decc-statistical-surveys-2011.doc&minwidth=true](http://www.decc.gov.uk/media/viewfile.ashx?filetype=4&filepath=11/stats/governance/3808-decc-statistical-surveys-2011.doc&minwidth=true)

### Compliance costs

A new methodology to calculate the compliance costs (or administrative burden) associated with statistical surveys has been developed by a GSS-wide Respondent Burden Task Force led by the ONS. Results in the next GSS report will be based on this new methodology.

Compliance costs are a measure of the cost to businesses of complying with government statistical surveys. They are calculated using the product of the number of forms received, average completion time and the average hourly rates of the person compiling the return. The average hourly rates were previously based on the Civil Service pay rates for directors, 'management' levels and clericals including an element to reflect overheads and were inflated each year using the average annual increase from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE). ONS have now amended the methodology and now the survey burden is estimated on ASHE staff costs with no uplift applied for overheads.

In 2011/12, DECC conducted 26 surveys of businesses, 24 of which were regular (see table 2) and 2 were ad-hoc surveys conducted to provide evidence for policy development. In 2010/11, DECC conducted 29 surveys, 24 were regular and 5 policy related ad-hoc surveys.

Total compliance costs in 2011/12, based on the 2011 ASHE rates, was £137,000, up 7% on the previous year and the number of survey forms sent out to businesses increased by 14%. The total compliance costs for the regular surveys was broadly the same when compared with the previous year, however the two ad-hoc surveys in 2011/12 were larger than the five combined in the previous year, resulting in an increase of 66% in the compliance costs for the ad-hoc surveys.

Based on the previous methodology, in 2010/11 DECC's compliance costs of businesses accounted for less than 0.5% of the total across all government surveys. It is anticipated that a similar proportion will be achieved under the new methodology.

**Table 1- Actual sample sizes and compliance costs**

	2010/11		2011/12		% change	
	Number of out-going survey forms	Compliance costs	Number of out-going survey forms	Compliance costs	Number of out-going survey forms	Compliance costs
Regular surveys	6,705	£ 114,500	6,603	£ 114,900	-2%	0%
Ad-hoc surveys	6,304	£ 13,600	8,212	£ 22,600	30%	66%
Total	13,009	£ 128,100	14,815	£ 137,500	14%	7%

In 2010/11, DECC compliance costs reduced considerably from 2009/10 as one of its large surveys which concerned the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions by Local Authorities, which accounted for 39% of the total burden for 2009/10, was withdrawn.

**Table 2 - List of regular surveys, frequency of data collection and compliance costs in 2011/12.**

	Surveys	Frequency	Compliance costs (£)
<b>Coal</b>	A: Coal Producers (Qtr)	Quarterly	60
	B: Coal Producers (Yr)	Annual	300
<b>Oil and Gas</b>	A: Gas suppliers(Qtr)	Quarterly	500
	B: Gas suppliers(Yr)	Annual	2,500
	DECC Oil and Natural Gas Survey	Half-Annual	5,700
	Downstream Oil Reporting System	Monthly	26,000
	Hypermarket Petrol and DERV	Monthly	150
	Liquefied Petroleum Gas Deliveries	Quarterly	100
	Oil Stocking	Monthly	600
<b>Electricity</b>	A: Generators, distributors and suppliers of electricity(Mth)	Quarterly	25,300
	B: Generators, distributors and suppliers of electricity(Yr)	Annual	1,900
	Electricity Generators Inquiry.	Quarterly	4,300
<b>Renewables</b>	Renewable Energy Statistics	Annual	90
<b>Prices</b>	Annual petroleum products prices inquiry	Annual	60
	Crude Oil imports	Monthly	500
	Domestic Fuels Inquiry	Quarterly	2,100
	Generators Inquiry	Quarterly	2,100
	New Price Transparency Survey : Domestic	Quarterly	900
	New Price Transparency Survey: Non-domestic	Quarterly	2,100
	Prices paid by final consumers petroleum products	Monthly	500
	Producer Price Index	Monthly	4,300
	Quarterly Fuels Inquiry	Quarterly	33,300
	Weekly oil product prices	Weekly	1,300
<b>Other</b>	Social Programme reporting (Company Fuel Poverty Initiatives)	Annual	200
	<b>Total</b>		<b>114,900</b>

**Anwar Annut**

Survey Control Liaison Officer

Tel: 0300 068 5060

E-mail: [Anwar.Annut@decc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Anwar.Annut@decc.gsi.gov.uk)