

Enhancing Statistical Co-operation in Ireland

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Abstract

Co-operation between the Central Bank of Ireland and the Central Statistics Office was expanded following two developments in the late 1990s and early 2000s. New data reporting obligations on balance of payments statistics to the European Central Bank led to the signing of a formal agreement between both institutions in 2002. Secondly, a joint review of the financial statistics collected by the Central Statistics Office and the Central Bank was undertaken, as part of an Irish Government initiative to streamline the collection of statistics for policy needs. This highlighted significant duplication in the collection and compilation of financial sector statistics. Following the review, structures were put in place to address the key issues raised. These included establishing a high-level co-ordinating committee, and a series of sub-committees to look at particular statistical areas. This has led to greater levels of co-operation, the elimination of duplication, greater rationalisation of statistical activities, and the creation of technical expert groups to examine conceptual and methodological issues. As part of a drive to minimise the reporting burden, a number of joint surveys have also been established, legal issues on the exchange of data have been addressed, and joint work programmes for the development of new statistics adopted. This paper outlines the history of the co-operative work, initiatives undertaken to date, and plans to further enhance collaboration. The joint work has allowed both institutions to concentrate on areas of comparative advantage, share expertise and expand statistical coverage of the financial sector.

Key Words: bop/BOP agreement, confidentiality, data-sharing, joint surveys.