

Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation
(by email)

30th November 2022

Dear Ed,

The recent correspondence between the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) regarding Business Expenditure Research and Development (BERD) statistics refers (see below).

- [Letter from ONS to OSR re R&D Statistics 4 Nov 2022](#)
- [Reply from OSR to ONS re R&D Statistics 21 Nov 2022](#)

In its recent correspondence, the ONS requested that the OSR temporarily paused the National Statistics status of the detailed breakdowns for UK BERD until the second stage of the redevelopment work completes in 2023.

You will be aware that NISRA also produces R&D National Statistics for Northern Ireland (NI). In line with arrangements across the rest of the UK, we consider it prudent to publish a reduced set of breakdowns in our forthcoming R&D publication on the 15th of December. This will allow the second phase of the planned redevelopment work to take place during 2023 as already indicated by the ONS, which will focus on securing a more representative sample of smaller businesses and industries in NI.

We have compared our NI level estimates with the published HM Revenue and Customs R&D statistics which provides us with reassurance that our high level estimates are robust. Naturally, though, uncertainty in the estimates increases below the NI level as there is less data available for validation.

Accordingly, we would advise that the OSR should temporarily pause the National Statistics status of the detailed breakdowns for NI BERD until such times as we can convey more certainty on the distribution of R&D by, for example, business size, sector and product group.

We have agreed to continue to collaborate with ONS colleagues on such matters and to expedite the work as swiftly as possible for key stakeholders and users. In the fullness of time I believe that the work will add to the Trustworthiness, Quality and Value of R&D statistics across the UK.

Yours sincerely,



Brian Green
Director of Economic Statistics; Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)