
Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation

Brian Green
Director of Economic Statistics
Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
(by email)

8 December 2022

Dear Brian

Research and Development Statistics for Northern Ireland

Thank you for your letter of 30 November 2022 setting out the impacts from ONS's project to redevelop its Business Enterprise Research and Development (BERD) statistics on [Northern Ireland's Statistics from the Northern Ireland Research and Development Survey](#).

I welcome your team's openness and proactive engagement with us on this matter and commend your commitment to make further improvements to the methodology behind these statistics.

I am very pleased that the comparison of the Northern Ireland estimates from the R&D Survey you have made against the published HM Revenue and Customs R&D statistics indicates that your high-level estimates are robust.

However, as you point out there is greater uncertainty in the estimates below the NI level as there is less data available for validation. While there are clear potential benefits to the intended redevelopment of the methodology used to make the estimates, I agree with you that NISRA should temporarily pause the National Statistics status of the detailed breakdowns for NI BERD. The temporary suspension would be until such times as you can convey more certainty on the distribution of R&D by, for example, business size, sector and product group.

We will continue to engage with your statisticians, via our Business, Trade and International Development team, and look forward to considering the restoration of National Statistics status once you are assured that the statistics can meet the standards expected by the Code of Practice for Statistics.

I am copying this letter to Siobhan Carey CBE, Registrar General for NI & Chief Executive NISRA

Yours sincerely



Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation