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|  | **Brian Green**  **Director of Economic Statistics**  Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency  Colby House  Stranmillis Court Belfast  BT9 5RR  Tel: 028 9038 8479  Email: brian.green@nisra.gov.uk |
| Ed Humpherson  Director General for Regulation  (by email) | 24th July 2024 |

**Assessment of Northern Ireland Research and Development Statistics**

Dear Ed

Thank you for your letter dated 11th July 2024, which set out the outcome of your recent Spotlight on Quality assessment of NISRA’s Business Expenditure on Research and Development (NI BERD) Statistics.

I am extremely grateful for all the work that our small team at NISRA have delivered thus far in respect of the R&D improvements and, in particular, for the proactive and collaborative approach to working with colleagues at the ONS. That engagement has been hugely beneficial and has sought to ensure a coherent and collaborative approach to implementing improvements to the NI and UK BERD methodologies, ultimately improving the quality of the statistics.

I wanted to put on record our appreciation for all of the work that you and your team at the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) put into the assessment and for both the courteous and professional manner that the team engaged with us here at NISRA and the insights provided.

At NISRA, we very much value the independent perspective & challenge that the OSR brings through its regulatory work. The team will take encouragement from the positive aspects of your assessment report and will proactively address the two areas that you believe will strengthen the statistics further.

Specifically, a meeting will be arranged with key stakeholders towards the end of the Summer to further understand users’ needs, provide transparency around the developments and understand how NISRA can improve communicating uncertainty.

The team is also working closely with ONS colleagues to assess the feasibility of developing a back series beyond 2018, the outworkings of which will be communicated to the OSR and users in due course.

We look forward to continued engagement with OSR colleagues as we seek to advance this work.

Yours sincerely,

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Brian Green, Director of Economic Statistics, NISRA

cc Philip Wales (Dr), Chief Executive NISRA and Registrar General for Northern Ireland

Chris Ganley, NISRA

Gerard Colgan, NISRA