

AN AGREEMENT

Between

THE BANK OF ENGLAND

and

THE OFFICE FOR NATIONAL STATISTICS

TO SUPPLY DATA FOR MACRO-ECONOMIC STATISTICAL PURPOSES

The Bank of England and the Office for National Statistics hereby adopt the attached AGREEMENT in relation to the supply of data for national accounts and related purposes


On behalf of

Bank of England

On behalf of

Office for National Statistics

Signed



Signed

X

Pete Lee
Head of Corporations

Date: 25 May 2021

Date 25th May 2021

AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE BANK OF ENGLAND AND THE OFFICE FOR NATIONAL STATISTICS TO SUPPLY DATA FOR MACRO-ECONOMIC STATISTICAL PURPOSES

Introduction

1. The Government, the Bank of England and other users of statistics including the institutions of the European Union require timely and accurate macro-economic statistics to monitor developments in the economy of the United Kingdom. This Agreement:
 - describes the contribution of the Bank of England (the 'Bank') in the form of the compilation and/or supply of data for use in the national accounts and other statistical products compiled by the Office for National Statistics (the 'ONS');
 - establishes the arrangements for supply;
 - establishes procedures for monitoring the quality of the Bank's contribution and improving it where necessary; and
 - covers the supply of certain statistics by the ONS to the Bank.
2. The supply of confidential data under the Agreement will take place when permitted by the relevant legislation governing the disclosure of confidential data to third parties. Such legislation includes for example the Bank of England Act 1998.
3. The Agreement is not intended to be legally binding and is a publicly-available document.

Scope of this Agreement

4. The present Agreement covers data¹ exports provided by the Bank to the ONS from the Bank's Data and Statistics Division ('DSD'), together with data currently provided electronically or associated written forms of communication, for the purposes described above.
5. The Agreement additionally covers the supply by the ONS to the Bank of certain statistical series which are required in order to compile data which it in turn supplies to the ONS; and in order to compile the monetary and financial statistics published by the Bank, which are in principle consistent with the ONS's financial accounts statistics. The Agreement covers the supply of macro-economic data series by the ONS to the Bank for onward transfer to the Bank for International Settlements.
6. A separate Data Sharing Agreement will cover ONS access to data derived from regulatory returns covering the insurance industry collected under Solvency II.
7. A separate Service Level Agreement also covers the provision of macro-economic statistics for analytical use by the ONS to Monetary Analysis and Financial Stability areas of the Bank.

¹ This includes both statistical and ad-hoc regulatory requests, both where the Bank collects and controls the data and where it acts as guardian of the data.

8. This Agreement covers the three year period from **1st June 2021**. It will be reviewed annually and with the consent of both parties will be amended as necessary and, from 1 June 2024 replaced by a new Agreement similarly covering a three year period.

Interpretation

9. Where it is found useful to interpret the terms of the Agreement or to provide guidance on its practical application, any clarification carries the same authority as the Agreement itself.

Parties and contact points

10. The signatories and chief contact officers for the Agreement are the Head of Corporations Division (Pete Lee) on behalf of the ONS and the Senior Manager of DSD's Financial Statistics Group (Perry Francis). The Agreement is signed on behalf and representing all suppliers of the data and facilities covered by this Agreement within the respective organisations. The ONS alternate is the Head of Monetary Financial Institutions Branch (Daniel Wisniewski) and the Bank alternate is the Manager of DSD's Money and Credit Group (Matt Davies). The chief contact officers will have joint responsibility for ensuring that its terms are followed on a daily basis. Either organisation may change the chief contact officer by notifying the other signatory to the Agreement in writing. Joint responsibility for the annual review sits with the chief contact officers.

Data and other facilities

11. The Bank undertakes to supply the ONS with the following series:
 - data supplied periodically for use in the national accounts, and other data, including series already published by the Bank, supplied for inclusion in ONS publications or for confidential dissemination to comply with international obligations;
 - data supplied, together with the confidentiality arrangements² governing ONS use, for use only within the ONS.
12. The ONS undertakes to supply the Bank with data for use in compiling monetary and financial statistics in line with the Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the Bank and the ONS. The SLA is updated as part of regular quarterly liaison meetings between the two organisations.
13. The ONS will make available to the Bank series in the fields of government finance and public debt, balance of payments, national accounts, output, orders and inventories, the labour market and prices, required by the Bank for International Settlements. The ONS will alert the Bank whenever any of these series cease to be published and/or are replaced or their definition is changed.

² Where the data are confidential, ONS is responsible for the primary and secondary disclosure of Bank data they are publishing or disseminating to meet international obligations.

14. The Agreement does not preclude the supply of additional data and facilities that may be agreed between the Bank and the ONS from time to time. When such ad-hoc requests are made ONS undertakes to provide the Bank with the following information: data series and descriptions; timing and frequency of supply; required level of detail and aggregation; preferred means of data transfer. Any requests for the regular supply of additional data agreed during the course of the year shall be incorporated into the Agreement at the next review.

Advice, interpretation and development programme

15. The ONS values the advice it receives from the Bank on the interpretation of the scheduled series and on methodological issues and recognises the importance of informal channels of communication, for example job shadowing during the quarterly round. The Bank agrees to continue to supply the ONS with advice to assist the ONS in interpreting the components of national accounts in which the Bank's data are used. The Bank agrees to endeavour to respond to questions about data for the latest reference period and revisions to those for previous periods, in time to meet ONS's requirements for input to their compilation process, for example to feed into the sector accounts, balancing and methodological review meetings. Similarly, the ONS agrees to endeavour to respond promptly to questions raised by the Bank on data which it has supplied under this Agreement.
16. Additionally, subject to agreement each year by its Directors that the necessary resources can be made available, the Bank agrees to carry out consultancy work in areas where it has responsibility for data collection. The specification and targets for this consultancy work, which will be focussed on developing sources and methods for the coverage of innovation and on improving coverage of existing financial products and institutions, will form the basis of the Bank's joint work programme with the ONS. The work programme will be agreed by both organisations, who will seek to complete it as quickly as resources permit.
17. The ONS and the Bank recognise the need to provide each other with relevant information to meet known and future international requirements and to prepare, where and when necessary, for such requirements.

Documentation of sources and methodology

18. The ONS needs to be aware of the sources of the Bank's data, including the nature of any embedded calculations, and to have sufficient information on the originating surveys or administrative sources to be able to assess the quality of the series and to ensure that the information is suitable for the uses to which it is put and/or for the calculations in which it will be used, particularly in terms of adherence to international standards. In turn, the Bank needs to be aware of the way in which ONS series supplied to the Bank are compiled and how they are used
19. Any changes to the Bank's procedures in compiling the data, to the extent that they affect the quality or relevance of the data, shall wherever practicable be discussed with the ONS and will liaise closely on their responses to evolving needs for changes to the collection systems through which the data are obtained. The Bank will provide the information required by the relevant ONS processes in place to authorise significant changes to methodology or data before they are introduced in the national accounts.

Quality

20. The Bank and the ONS recognise the importance of producing accurate data, within an appropriate conceptual framework. To ensure that data are fit for purpose, the quality of the data is assessed regularly, and improvements are made where necessary.
21. The Bank will take reasonable steps to achieve satisfactory and representative coverage of institutions measured by its surveys. Where the Bank notices a material deterioration in data quality (e.g. where the amount of imputation is materially greater than usual) this will be made known to the ONS at the time the figures are provided.
22. The ONS and the Bank undertake before the end of each calendar year to review the basis of the timetables for the supply of data between them and to produce an agreed detailed timetable covering the succeeding calendar year. Both parties undertake to meet the timetables and to give reasons if on any occasion this undertaking cannot be met. Changes to any timetable may be agreed at working level between the two organisations at any time. The chief contact officers will be informed of any such changes.

Revisions

23. The Bank and the ONS recognise that revisions monitoring is an important part of the evaluation of the quality of the national accounts, it can give a partial indication of the accuracy of the data supplied, and forms part of this Agreement, as described below.
24. The Bank will supply data amendments for previous periods with data for the current period and will provide the ONS at the time with a copy of its internal notes on any significant revisions. Where these revisions have a potential material effect on published national accounts and balance of payments aggregates and to the extent that the reasons for such revisions are not yet clearly apparent from the Bank's internal notes, the ONS may request explanations. The explanations given will be classified according to the following categories:
 - correction of errors by respondents or the Bank;
 - receipt of later returns;
 - receipt of benchmarking data;
 - introduction of a new data source;
 - methodological improvement;
 - data reassessment;
 - seasonal adjustment;
 - other.
25. Where the revision is attributed to 'methodological improvement', 'data reassessment' or 'other', the Bank will provide a description of what has been done.
26. The ONS has a policy for publishing revised national accounts data under which reference periods before a certain time are closed to revision in each quarterly or annual round. The Bank will make their best estimates available to the ONS at all times. Where this results in revised data which breach the ONS's revisions policy, the revisions for closed periods will not normally be used and those for open periods may be adjusted for improved coherence over time. Where the ONS simply reproduces the Bank's series in publications (e.g. monetary and banking series other than in the context of national accounts) the revisions policy will,

however, not apply. The ONS undertakes to discuss with the Bank at an early point in each national accounts quarterly or annual round any adjustments to the exported data which appear necessary and, immediately after finalisation of the ONS data, to provide details of adjustments actually made.

27. The ONS undertakes to provide briefings on significant revisions to certain data which it supplies the Bank.

Variations

28. Any variations to this Agreement between the annual reviews must be confirmed in writing by the two chief contact officers. This will be formally incorporated into the Agreement at the next review, unless otherwise agreed at the time.

Arrangements for monitoring and review

29. The ONS and the Bank will monitor the operation of this Agreement and undertake to inform each other at an early stage of any emerging problems. The quarterly reports on the delivery of data and on adherence to timetables will also be monitored by both sides and perceived issues raised in the first instance at quarterly liaison meetings. A formal annual assessment of the Bank's success in meeting its obligations under the Agreement, covering periods to end-March, will be completed by the ONS within three months of that date, and a meeting of signatories and chief contact officers will be convened shortly thereafter to take forward issues arising from the assessment.

Arrangements in extraordinary circumstances

30. The ONS and the Bank recognise the likelihood of service limitations which may become appropriate in extraordinary circumstances; these include a pandemic; significant travel infrastructure difficulties or any other event which renders the arrangements set out in the Agreement unachievable. In the event of such circumstances materialising the party affected will inform the other as quickly as is practically possible, preferably in writing, providing full details of the changes