

Welsh Government

Consultation Document

Use of State of the Environment Indicators

Date of issue: **25 July 2012**

Action required: Responses by **17 October 2012**

Overview

This consultation seeks views on:

- The usefulness of the State of the Environment annual report.
- Use made of the State of Environment Indicators.

How to respond

You can respond to the consultation by using the separate response form (in Excel format). This can be emailed to stats.environment@wales.gsi.gov.uk or posted to

Tim Evans
Environment Statistics
Knowledge and Analytical Services
Welsh Government
Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ

Further information and related documents

Large print, Braille and alternate language versions of this document are available on request.

Contact details

For further information, please contact Rhiannon Caunt or Tim Evans

Email: stats.environment@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Telephone: Rhiannon Caunt on 029 2082 5063, or Tim Evans on 029 2082 5616

Data protection

How the views and information you give us will be used

Any response you send us will be seen in full by Welsh Government staff dealing with the issues which this consultation is about. It may also be seen by other Welsh Government staff to help them plan future consultations.

The Welsh Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this document. We may also publish responses in full. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. This helps to show that the consultation was carried out properly. If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this in writing when you send your response. We will then blank them out.

Names or addresses we blank out might still get published later, though we do not think this would happen very often. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 allow the public to ask to see information held by many public bodies, including the Welsh Government. This includes information which has not been published. However, the law also allows us to withhold information in some circumstances. If anyone asks to see information we have withheld, we will have to decide whether to release it or not. If someone has asked for their name and address not to be published, that is an important fact we would take into account. However, there might sometimes be important reasons why we would have to reveal someone's name and address, even though they have asked for them not to be published. We would get in touch with the person and ask their views before we finally decided to reveal the information.

Background

The State of the Environment Statistical Bulletin and the online report and tables are published on a regular basis by the Welsh Government. The bulletin presents an overview of progress against the Welsh Government's [Environment Strategy](#) which was launched in May 2006, and sets out the Welsh Government's vision for the environment over the next 20 years.

The Environment statistics presented in the State of the Environment outputs come from a range of sources in Wales and across the UK, which are updated at different times and intervals. The results for individual indicators are published in an online report alongside which is an annual statistical bulletin which provides a summary on a range of indicators looking at the state of the environment in Wales and allocates them a status based on their long term trends. In addition to the online report, which presents analysis and background information for each of the indicators, detailed data is also available via our [StatsWales](#) website.

The online report has previously been produced twice a year in July and December, but following [consultation](#) it was decided that it will only be updated once a year in July.

The key use of the State of the Environment report is to monitor progress against the Welsh Government's Environment Strategy Action Plan. The [Programme for Government 2011 -2016](#), which is the current government programme, outlines the Welsh Government's goal to ensure that it makes the best possible use of Wales' resources: Welsh land, water and air. It also aims to focus on 'Living within environmental limits and acting on climate change' and 'Protecting healthy eco-systems'. In order to help assess what progress the Welsh Government is making there are a number of Programme for Government indicators, which are based on the data and the indicators in the online report and bulletin.

There are a variety of users of the data available in the online report and bulletin, including national and local government, voluntary organisations, environmental bodies, researchers, students and individual citizens.

Reasons for the consultation

It is important for us to know whether the statistics and outputs we produce and publish are meeting the needs of our users. In order to do this we firstly need to identify who our users are and find out what they use the information for. Whilst we are aware of a number of key users of the State of the Environment Indicators and their uses, we are aware there is still work to be done to understand who our wider users are and their uses.

Therefore in this consultation we would like to get your views on the usefulness of the State of the Environment bulletin and online report in its current form, and the uses made of each of the environmental indicators shown in the report. This will then help us determine what changes we need to make, if any, to the information we publish and how it is presented. The consultation is an opportunity to gather views from not only from our regular users in Welsh Government but from all our users.

A key driver for carrying out this consultation is the recent assessment by the UK Statistics Authority on sustainability and environmental statistics in Wales, which requires us to develop a greater understanding of the use made of our statistics.

Current outputs

The current outputs are as follows (including links to the latest versions):

On-line report - [The State of Environment Report 2012](#)

Annual statistical bulletin - [State of the Environment, July 2012](#)

Detailed data are also available on the interactive [StatsWales](#) website.

How people use the outputs

We want to take the opportunity to ask how people use the State of the Environment bulletin and report to help us match what we produce with users needs. The questionnaire asks some general questions about who you are, what environment indicators you use and how you use the information. This is an opportunity for us to find out more about users, particularly those outside our usual contacts in government and the environmental sector.

This is important in practice because not all users want the same information or want that information presented in the same way. Understanding the different needs of users will help us tailor our outputs rather than forcing everything into a one size fits all approach.

The questionnaire

To gather your responses to this consultation we have a questionnaire for you to complete. This is available electronically but also as a hard copy if requested. The questionnaire will look at the following areas.

- Who you are
- Whether you currently use the State of the Environment report
- Which of the environmental indicators you use
- What you use the information for
- How useful you find the information presented in the State of the Environment report.

What happens to the results?

We will publish a summary report of the responses with our reaction to them and a proposed action plan. This may include some of the comments received – excluding those where the respondent has asked to remain anonymous.