

The recently developed Northern Ireland Integrated Business Survey System (IBSS) has transformed the business statistics environment for a relatively small statistical office. A competitive tender to build the processing systems and deliver a managed service for data collection promoted an innovative approach. The achieved solution has helped reduce survey silos, improved coherence, automated processing and facilitated staff and workflow management with considerable efficiency gains. A combination of “off the shelf” software has been used to support a multi mode data collection strategy including scanning of paper forms, Telephone Data Entry and Electronic Data Collection. Novel features include the integration of a SAS layer alongside commercial case management software to help maximise and standardise the use of statistical methods throughout the Generic Statistics Business Process Model chain. Statistical integration has also facilitated the introduction of selective editing techniques to prioritise response chasing. The approach used provides a clear audit trail with the ability to examine effects at each stage of the process and / or to quickly reproduce results following minor adjustments early in the process. The introduction of pdf based e-surveys, which businesses find much more attractive than web portals, has resulted in significantly improved response rates. Solving the problems associated with survey integration and automation has led inevitably to a Statistical Data Warehouse (S-DWH) solution. The IBSS can also handle a range of reporting unit structures, whether these are local sites or individual employees within a business. Next steps include examining the potential to integrate social surveys into the S-DWH and make greater use of a wider range of Administrative databases. The presentation also includes discussion of the efficiencies gained, and the cultural changes needed to support the implementation.