



Promoting Statistical Evidence

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RESAS

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Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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Agricultural Statistics in Scottish Government

- Overview of current evidence needs
- Mainly geared to EU policy making
- Focus on Scottish Policy Making
- Refocus outcomes from Brexit policy development

The problem with our statistics

- Policy development is clearly not using the statistical evidence base effectively
- With changes due to exit from EU frameworks it is important to use this opportunity to improve the use of the evidence base in policymaking
- Political focus or strategies often rely on anecdotal or small focus group evidence, often with a vested interest
- Economics vs Statistics – policy makers will quickly rely on economic and social research
- Previous attempts to improve statistics – statisticians have been encouraged to improve info-graphics, this is a wholesale change

The challenges of promoting statistics

- Who are our publications intended to help?
- Do they attract a non-technical audience?
- How do we improve impact?
- Are our statistics addressing current issues and strategies

The solution to our statistics

- Stakeholder analysis
- Targeted to the audience
- Analysis becomes integral to policy development
 - Guard against book-ending policy development with analysis
 - Not being afraid to challenge myths and preconceived issues
 - Analysis should help shift the policy thinking
- Strategic Planning to deliver better analysis
- Integrate statistics and economic analysis

Stage 1 - Better writing

- Writing that is in 'Plain English'
- The Inverted Pyramid
- First line describer
- Second line evidence
- Explain key terms
- Testing on a non-technical audience

Stage 1 - Better Analysis

- No escalator statistics (x has increased, y has decreased)
- Focus
 - Current affairs
 - Policy needs
 - New insights
- ELI5 (explain like I'm 5)
- Declutter graphs and improve readability

Stage 1 - Better Structure

- Readable format
 - Web publication
 - Printed publication
 - Pdf screen publication
- Simplify design and use of fonts
- White space
- Key statistics

Stage 2 – Policy Alignment

- Publication planning – getting ready for bigger publications
- Agreeing a focus with policy – what are the competing demands
- For the future – developing new statistics to support evidence gaps

Stage 3 – Accessibility of Statistics

- Easier access to statistics – Statistics Scotland
- Better signposting and web organisation
- Data visualisations

Future Work – Data Science

- Evidence Gaps
 - Crop maps
 - Woodland areas
- Data visualisations
 - Allow self-researched analysis – Statistics Scotland
- Better alignment with the other professions
 - Economists
 - Operational Researchers
 - GIS support