



E: economic.statistics@gov.scot

Richard Murphy
Via email

Your ref:
Our ref: FOI/18/03301

4 December 2018

REQUEST UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (SCOTLAND) ACT 2002 (FOISA)

Dear Richard Murphy

Thank you for your request dated 8 November 2018 under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA).

Your request

You asked:

- 1 Is the Scottish Government obliged to produce GERS each year?
- 2 If Yes, by whom?
- 3 If No, Why (other than showing Scotland's finances in a bad light)?
- 4 How much or what % is compiled independently of UK central government?
- 5 Do the same statisticians who produce GERS also provide independent statistics to the Scottish Fiscal Commission?

Response to your request

The decision to publish Government Expenditure & Revenues Scotland (GERS) lies with the Scottish Government's Chief Statistician. GERS is a National Statistics publication, which means that it is produced in line with the Code of Practice for Statistics,¹ following consultation with users and the public to ensure that it meets their needs.

¹ <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/code-of-practice/the-code/>

As a National Statistics publication GERS is compiled entirely independently of UK central government departments and of Scottish Ministers. Decisions on the compilation of GERS are made in consultation with users in order to meet user needs, and are ultimately decided upon by the Scottish Government's Chief Statistician. In their most recent review of GERS, the UK Statistics Authority concluded that the publication is "produced according to sound methods and managed impartially and objectively in the public interest".²

GERS is produced by the National Accounts unit in the Office of the Chief Economic Adviser in the Scottish Government. The National Accounts unit produces a number of National Statistics which are used by the Scottish Fiscal Commission. As set out in the Scottish Government's Scottish Economic Statistics Plan 2018-19,³ the Scottish Government is prioritising the needs of the Commission to ensure that the Commission's data requirements, contained in its Statement of Data Needs,⁴ are met where practically possible.

Your right to request a review

If you are unhappy with this response to your FOI request, you may ask us to carry out an internal review of the response, by writing to the Chief Economist, St Andrews House, Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG, or emailing Gary.Gillespie@gov.scot. Your review request should explain why you are dissatisfied with this response, and should be made within 40 working days from the date when you received this letter. We will complete the review and tell you the result, within 20 working days from the date when we receive your review request.

If you are not satisfied with the result of the review, you then have the right to appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner. More detailed information on your appeal rights is available on the Commissioner's website at:

<http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/YourRights/Unhappywiththeresponse/AppealingtoCommissioner.aspx>.

Yours sincerely

Iain Pearce

Office of the Chief Economic Adviser
St Andrews House

 @ScotGovOCEA

² <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/archive/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-274---statistics-on-government-expenditure-and-revenue-scotland.pdf>

³ <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Economy/ScotStat/Planning/SESP2018-19>

⁴ <http://www.fiscalcommission.scot/publications/occasional-papers/statement-of-data-needs-september-2018/>