



Australian Government
Department of Communications

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Statistics Review 2014–15 Terms of Reference

Background

The Government is committed to growing e-Government and the digital economy. Improving the quality of data on the digital economy available to decision-makers is an important element of this commitment.

To this end, an ICT Statistics Review will be conducted jointly by the ABS and the Department of Communications in conjunction with the Departments of Industry and Finance to:

- identify priority information needs for ICT statistics
- identify gaps and examine options for improving the quality (in particular, the timeliness and relevance) of data available to decision-makers in the digital economy
- investigate the scope for non-traditional inputs and collection processes, including the possibility for automated data collections instead of surveys, and
- review the framework for measuring ICT and its contribution to social wellbeing and the economy.

Working Definitions

Key terms to be used in the ICT Statistics Review are initially defined as follows:

- ICT – technologies and services that enable information to be accessed, stored, processed, transformed, manipulated and disseminated, including the transmission or communication of voice, image and/or data over a variety of transmission media
- ICT statistics – statistics to inform decision-making for ICT and the digital economy
- digital economy – markets based on digital technologies that facilitate the trade of goods and services e.g. through e-commerce
- e-commerce – sale or purchase of goods or services, whether between businesses, households, individuals, governments, and other public or private organisations, conducted over the internet
- e-business – includes e-commerce as well as processes such as production, inventory management, product development, risk management, finance, knowledge management and human resources aimed at achieving cost savings, and improvements in both efficiency and productivity.

Terms of Reference

The ICT Statistics review will:

- consider the definitions used for key terms such as ICT, ICT statistics, the digital economy, digital technologies, digital readiness, diffusion and intensity
- identify priority information requirements, covering all sectors of the economy, including public, private and non-profit sectors, and measuring the economic, people and societal dimensions, with particular consideration given to:
 - the availability and use of digital products and services
 - productivity in the digital economy
 - digital economy policy, including internet-based interactions for government services
 - improving the quality of ICT data available to decision-makers
- identify gaps, overlaps, limitations and appropriateness of existing ABS ICT statistics and other authoritative data sources in meeting priority information requirements for measuring the economic, people and societal dimensions, including a quality assessment against the ABS data quality framework
- examine options for use of administrative by-product and 'big data' as efficient alternatives to direct survey data collection
- develop a proposal to effectively measure the contribution that ICT makes to the Australian economy and productivity across all industry sectors. The framework will support international comparisons and be consistent with national accounting principles
- prepare a report on key findings, setting out short, medium and longer term recommendations focused on enhancing the information currently available for policy-makers and specifying potential implementation impacts.

Governance

A small project board will be established to oversee the Review. The project board will comprise a senior representative from each of the ABS and the Department of Communications (Bureau of Communications Research) with input from the Department of Industry and the Department of Finance.

The Review will be undertaken by a project team which will be formed by the ABS and the Department of Communications and led by the Program Manager, Innovation and Technology Statistics, ABS, and the Executive Director, Bureau of Communications Research, Department of Communications.

The Review team will undertake a public submission process. In addition, identified priority stakeholders will be consulted, and submissions will be invited from key interest and user groups such as sectoral peak bodies. The Review will be undertaken on a minimal cost basis and jointly funded from existing available resources by the ABS and the Department of Communications.