

Proposed consultation on ethnicity, identity, language and religion

Introduction

- 1 This paper is for information. It provides a summary of ONS's plans for further consultation on the ethnicity, national identity, language and religion (EILR) topics for the 2011 Census.

Action

- 2 **Census Advisory Groups are invited to note the proposals for consultation and comment at the meeting.**

Objectives

- 3 ONS proposes to conduct a consultation on ethnicity, identity, language and religion (EILR) topics in November-December 2006 to complement the information obtained from the wider census topics consultation held in 2005, from existing groups and committees with an interest in EILR, and from question testing.
- 4 The objectives of the consultation are to determine specific requirements on these topics and seek views on possible developments. Some of the key aims are to establish:
 - the extent that information from the questions on ethnic group, national identity, religion and language to be included in the 2007 Census Test would meet users' needs from the 2011 Census;
 - users' views on the terms the people find acceptable to describe their ethnic group, bearing in mind that these can change over time – in particular, the use of colour labels such as 'Black' and 'White';
 - what would be the advantages and disadvantages to users if multiple response information on ethnic group was collected instead of single responses;

- to what extent do users need to compare 2011 Census data with the 2001 Census; and
- what type of language information is needed.

Target audience

- 5 The target audience for the consultation are users of EILR data and stakeholder organisations such as community representative groups. Stakeholder organisations, such as those promoting equality/ understanding between different groups, and those that promote the interests of a specific group or groups will be included in the consultation. Those who have previously been in contact with ONS about EILR topics will also be invited to respond.
- 6 ONS is also carrying out desk research to obtain names of community groups who are likely to have an interest in the EILR questions, but who have not so far engaged with ONS on these issues.
- 7 Heads of Profession (HoPs) in statistics and social research, members of the National Statistics Working Group on Ethnicity and Identity (NSWGEI) and other cross-departmental forums such as the Inter Departmental Group for Race Equality and the Interdepartmental Group on Faith, will also be among those invited to respond to the consultation.
- 8 **Members of all the Census Advisory Groups will also be notified when the EILR consultation is launched and invited to respond.**
- 9 ONS's EILR consultation will focus on users and stakeholders in England and Wales and organisations whose remit covers Great Britain or the UK as a whole. The Scottish Executive and NISRA may consult the key contacts in Scotland and Northern Ireland using similar questions.

Communications

- 10 The consultation documents will be circulated by email and will also be available on the National Statistics website. Currently ONS aims to start the consultation by **17 November 2006**.
- 11 Any responses received by the **end of November/early December** can be analysed in time to inform the wave of EILR question testing, which is due to take place in early 2007.
- 12 Responses received by **Spring 2007** may be analysed in time to inform the following wave of question testing, which is scheduled to take place between May and September 2007.

Use and reporting of information

- 13 ONS will analyse the responses to the consultation and produce a report on users' and stakeholders' requirements. Those who respond to the consultation will receive a draft of the report before publication.
- 14 ONS will then consider the extent to which the requirements for EILR information can be met using the Census. Any potential changes to the 2001 questions will first be tested for ease of understanding and completion, and for acceptability to respondents. This testing will form a separate piece of research using qualitative and quantitative methods.
- 15 For more information please contact:
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