

## **Frequently asked questions about the UK adoption of industrial classification of economic activity**

### **Why is the ONS consulting?**

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is the custodian of UK Standard Industry Classification (UK SIC). The main purpose of the UK SIC is to provide a set of activity categories covering all areas of the economy, primarily for the collection and reporting of official statistics.

The UK SIC is used in classifying business establishments and other statistical units by the type of economic activity in which they are engaged.

The ONS classifications team engage regularly with stakeholders across the GSS (Governmental Statistical Service), academia and trade bodies, representing their views in relation to the revision of UK SIC and its related international classifications. Organisations that use the classification operationally such as Companies House and HMRC set the parameters for their UK SIC requirements and provide guidance to their users.

Following the recent revisions of the international classifications, the UK SIC also needs to be revised.

### **Who should complete this consultation?**

This public consultation is open to all, but aimed primarily at statistical users. It is therefore assumed that those completing the consultation will understand how each of the presented options could affect their current and future use for producing statistics.

### **Why is it important to businesses?**

It's important to ensure that statistics accurately reflect the activities of the UK economy with a classification that is up-to-date and reflects the changes that have occurred since the 2007 revision. It's also important to maintain a level of international comparability. Taking part will give businesses the opportunity to have their say on how they use the classification and understand the relationships of the associated international family of classifications.

### **How is it relevant to an individual business or group of businesses to complete the consultation? What's the difference to them?**

Completion of the survey will help us understand how you use the classification and what is important to you. User feedback will help towards our understanding of what the next steps should be for the revision of UK SIC and its international alignment.

### **Can individuals or organisations from outside the UK complete the consultation?**

Anyone can complete the consultation, even if they are outside the UK. However, all responses need to be based on the UK system.

### **Can I request additional information or clarification on specific aspects of the consultation?**

Please carefully read the consultation document found at the bottom of [the consultation page](#) before completing it. If you have any queries, please contact [sic.consultation@ons.gov.uk](mailto:sic.consultation@ons.gov.uk).

### **Is there any opportunity for public or stakeholder meetings, webinars, or other engagement events related to this consultation?**

The ONS is hosting two free webinars to external audiences at 2pm on 14 November and 11am on 16 November about the consultation. The aim of the webinars is to provide more information on the different classifications and requirements, and provide an opportunity to answer queries attendees may have about the consultation.

### **Will my feedback be kept confidential, and what will it be used for?**

We aim to be as open as possible in our decision-making process. As part of this, we plan to publish an anonymised summary of the responses we receive. We will not publish the personal name of any respondent. Names of individuals, organisations and groups will not be linked to any comments that you give.

The names of all organisations and groups responding to the consultation will be published in a list of respondents.

Please be aware that, as a public authority, we are subject to the [Freedom of Information Act 2000](#) and can never completely guarantee that names and responses will not be published.

### **Are there specific guidelines for submitting comments or suggestions?**

If you are answering on behalf of a business or organisation, please ensure you have any necessary permissions from the organisation ahead of completing the consultation.

### **When does the consultation close?**

The consultation closes on 23 January 2024.

### **What happens once the consultation closes?**

Once the consultation closes, the ONS will review and analyse the responses provided. We will publish a summary of the responses within 12 weeks of the consultation closing.

### **When will the changes be made?**

A SIC revision is a lengthy process, which we will begin as soon after the reporting of the consultation as we can. As an example, UK SIC 2007, the last major revision of the UK Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities (UK SIC), was announced in 2002. It was completed and became effective from 1 January 2008.

We anticipate the changes that will be made following this consultation will take a similar amount of time. We will provide updates about its progress as often as we can.