



Cabinet Office

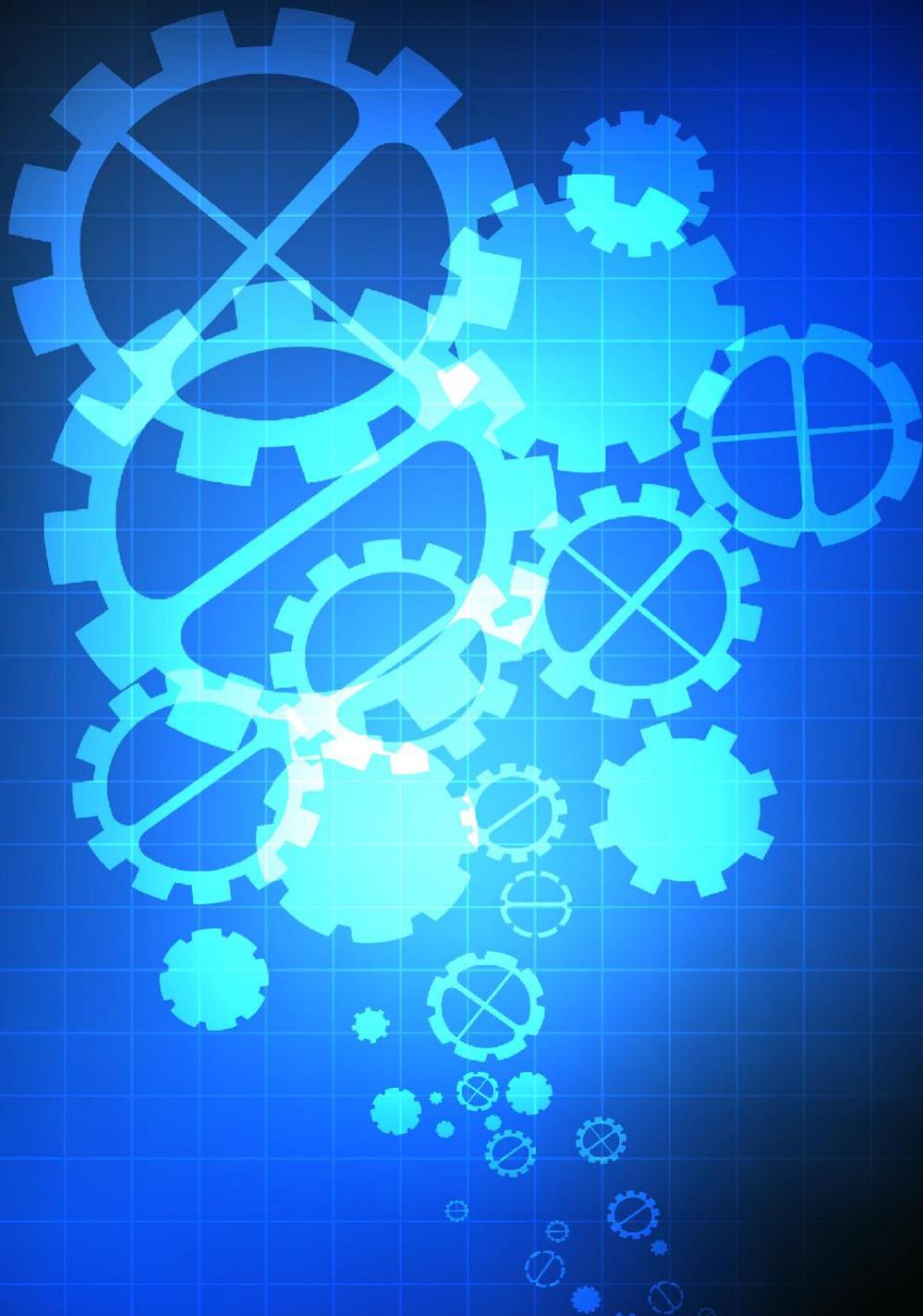
Government Grants Statistics

Statistics development plan

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Next publication: March 2021

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Background



Background

Purpose of this document

Cabinet Office and the Government Grants Management Function (GGMF) are committed to the ongoing review and improvement of its published statistics to ensure they are of the highest quality and public value. As part of this commitment, we (GGMF) will publish ongoing statistics development plans.

This development plan explains the current quality of the Government Grants Statistics and our plans for their improvement.

The Government Grants Register and Grants Landscape report

Government is committed to increasing transparency, enabling taxpayers to hold the state to account both on how their money is being spent and how decisions are made which affect their lives.

To meet this commitment, we publish Government Grants Statistics which includes:

The Government Grants Register - a dataset of grant spending across government; covering general grants (at both scheme and award level) and formula grants (at scheme level).

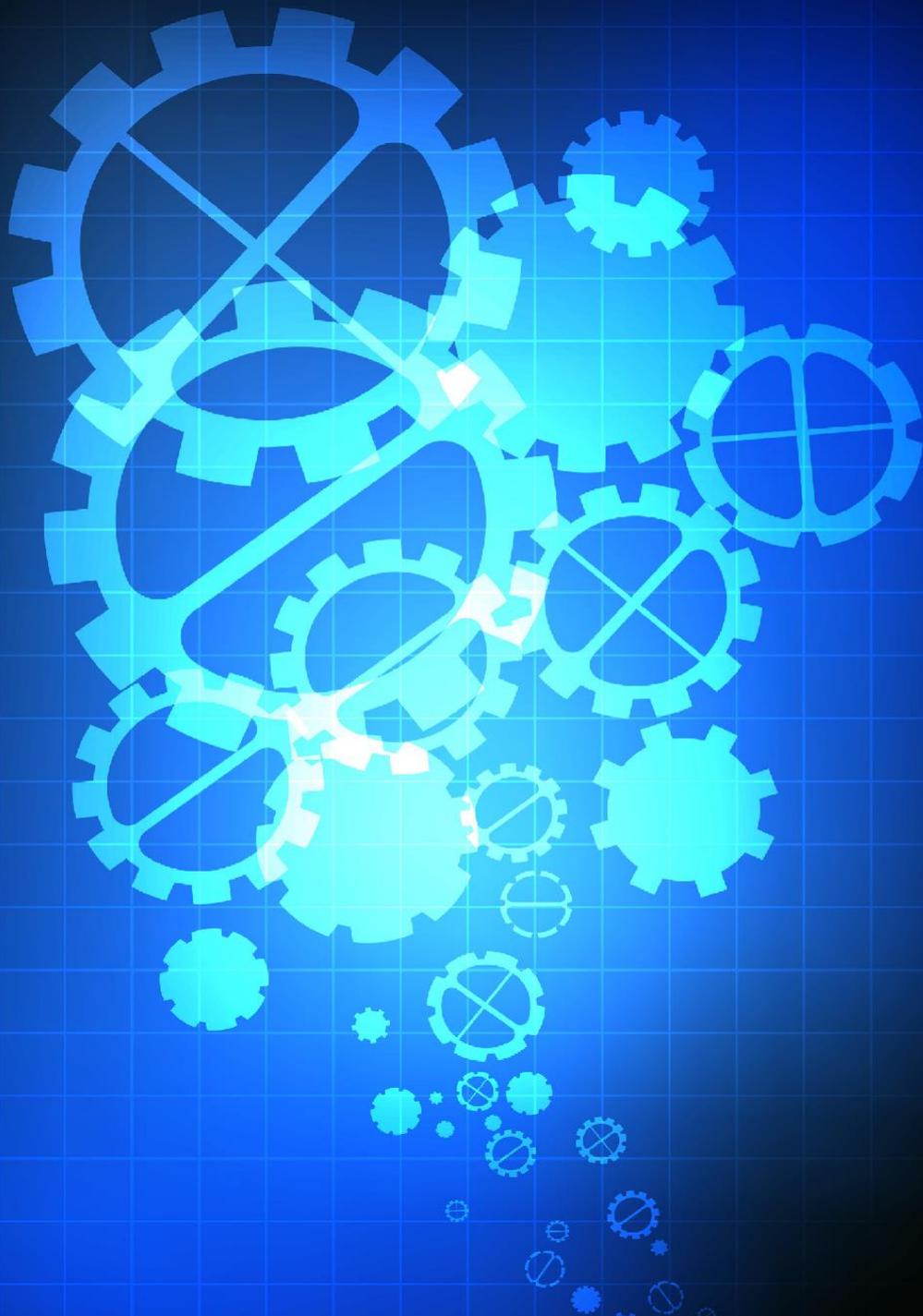
The Grants Landscape report - published for the first time in October 2020, to accompany the 2018/19 Government Grants Register. This document explains and contextualises the published grants data. Published alongside this report is a set of statistical tables, displaying all figures used in the report in a more accessible format.

Statistical classification

The Government Grants Landscape is published as management information. We are currently working towards designation of these statistics as Official Statistics, which completion of the actions in this plan will facilitate.

Government is committed to increasing transparency, enabling taxpayers to hold the state to account both on how their money is being spent and how decisions are made which affect their lives.

Trustworthiness, Quality and Value



Trustworthiness, quality and value

In line with the UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) Code of Practice for Statistics, we have worked to improve the trustworthiness, quality, and value of this publication. There remain a number of key areas for further improvement. These areas are outlined below.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is a product of the people, systems and processes within organisations that enable and support the production of statistics and data. A key area for trustworthiness improvement for these statistics is:

Orderly release (the data should be released on a timeline that meets user requirements)

- Due to quality concerns, these statistics have not previously been released on a regular, expected timetable.

Quality

Quality means that statistics fit their intended uses, are based on appropriate data and methods, and are not materially misleading.

The Government Grants data on which these statistics are based is gathered via a central database called the Government Grants Information System (GGIS). Areas for quality improvement primarily relate to the limitations of this system.

Key areas for quality improvement for these statistics are:

Completeness (the data should cover all government grants that are in scope)

- We believe that the vast majority of government grants are included in the latest publication, making it the most comprehensive release to date. However, we cannot guarantee that it is fully complete. We are aware that there are likely to be some grant schemes and awards which are missing. These are primarily grants from arms length bodies (ALBs) who have not added their data to GGIS.
- Currently, only general grants are published at award level. Awards for formula schemes have not been gathered as part of this data collection due to the current lack of departmental grants data infrastructure.
- The award description field is not reliably completed by all data suppliers.

Consistency (data fields should have consistent definitions between data suppliers)

- Fields are not consistently completed across departments - for example, some departments provide actual award values and others provide budgeted award values.
- Some recipients are duplicated in the GGIS database - Many recipient organisations are contained within the data multiple times (because they received multiple grants), but have different details between their different awards. This is due to their information being uploaded multiple times, independently onto the GGIS database.

Data specification (the data should be specified in a way that allows quality data to be collected)

- GGIS specifies how the data should be input by departments. There are a number of limitations to how fields in GGIS are specified that prevent data accurately being entered. For example, for schemes that cover multiple years, a single budgeted value is provided and this is split evenly between financial years to calculate a single year's value - this will be inaccurate in many cases.
- Departments do not always have systems that provide easy access to the data as specified by GGIS.
- Start and end dates for schemes and awards do not necessarily represent the actual start and end dates, as these are not specified precisely.

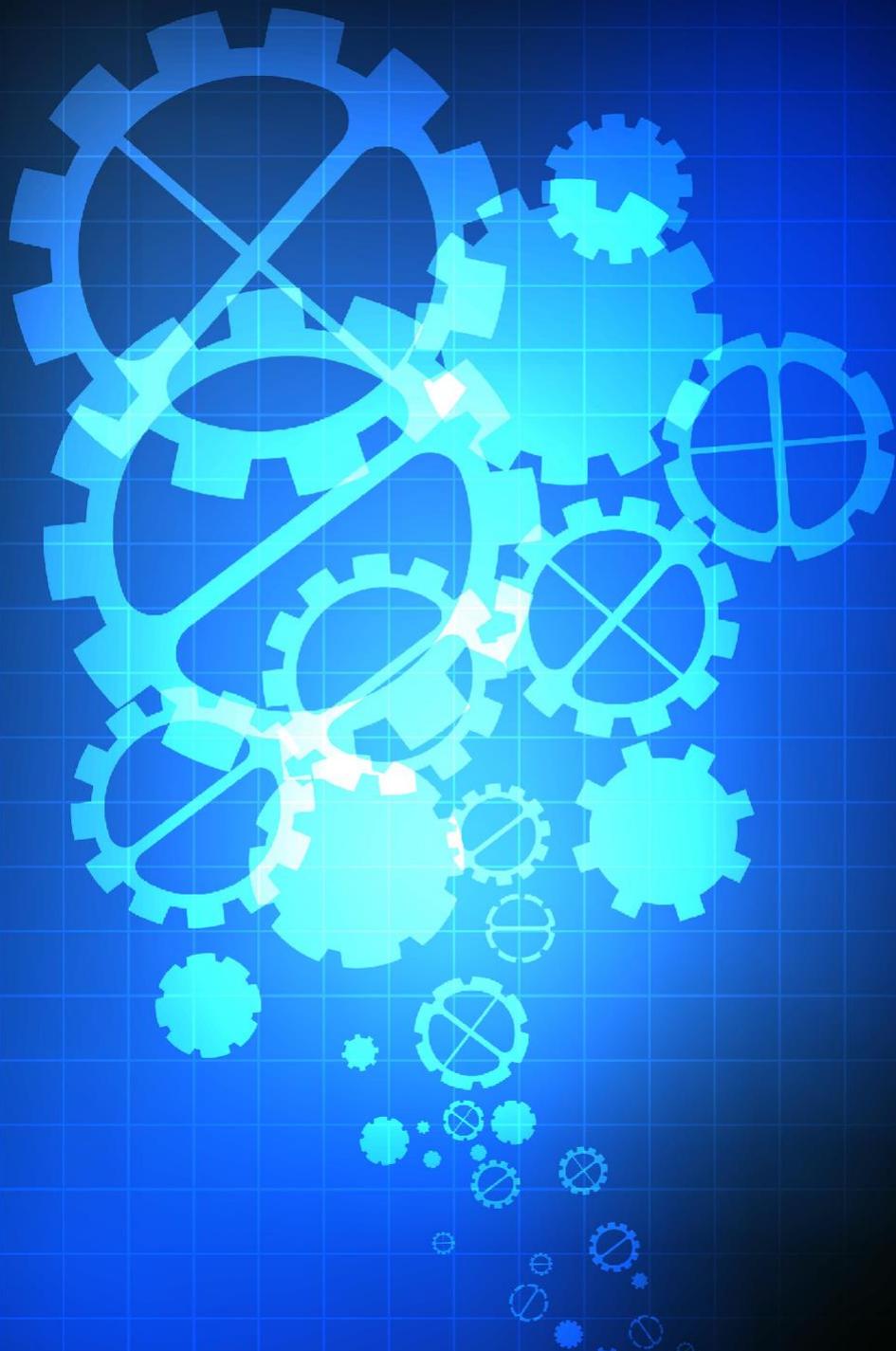
Value

Value means that the statistics and data are useful, easy to access, remain relevant, and support understanding of important issues. A key area for value improvement for these statistics is:

Relevance (the data should be relevant to users)

- We do not have a strong understanding of the users of these statistics. This limits our ability to ensure that the statistics are relevant to users.

Development Plan



Development Plan

The following is a list of GGMF's actions to improve these statistics to date and expected actions over the next year.



What we have done:

- We are currently developing a new version of GGIS to directly address the data quality issues described above. By engaging with data suppliers and internal data users throughout development, the system and the data captured will be significantly improved.
- Published the Grants Landscape report alongside the dataset, to help users to better understand the data and the grants context.
- Published additional supporting documentation to explain limitations/caveats of the data.
- Worked to understand our users:
 - Published a user consultation for these statistics
 - One known user of grants data is 360Giving who provide an open data standard for grants data. GGMF has engaged with 360Giving throughout the production of these statistics to ensure that the published awards data meet this standard, and will continue to ensure we meet this requirement in future publications.
- Complete review of data fields, alongside departments, to identify many of the data quality issues and respecify these fields where possible. Newly specified fields will be included in the new version of GGIS and will correct the data specification issues outlined above.
- Identified immediate areas for improvement in the collection process. This includes the creation of automated validation routines.
- Adapted the collection methodology and improved departmental baselining, to increase the completeness of the data.
- Provided additional analytical assistance to departments to improve data quality and completeness.
- Conducted thorough research into which ALBs give out grants and therefore identified which are missing from the data. This identified c.£1bn of missing scheme data, the vast majority of which has now been added to GGIS and included in the 18/19 publication.
- Produced and published this document to demonstrate our commitment to complying with the Code of Practice for Statistics.



What we will do:

- Deduplicate our recipient database - by identifying organisations that are duplicated and combining their data - thereby facilitating accurate recipient level analysis (November 2020)
- Complete a thorough review of the quality and completeness of grants data already published for previous years (November 2020)
- Publish a complete data standard for government grants, outlining exactly how fields in this data should be specified and understood (March 2021)
- Produce a reproducible analytical pipeline (RAP) for the process from the data to the publication, and further automate quality assurance processes (March 2021)
- Review the feedback gathered through the user consultation and build this into future versions of this publication (March 2021)
- Announce the publication date in advance and ensuring resources are in place to meet that date (March 2021)
- Launch of the new version of GGIS for use by departments (April 2021)
- Include automated audit trails in the next version of GGIS to allow us to track any changes to the data, and monitor ongoing quality and completeness improvements (April 2021)
- Work towards official statistics designation for future publications (Ongoing)
- Collect and publish awards for formula schemes (Ongoing)