

Background Quality Report

UK Land Holdings 2020

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

This is an annual publication which provides figures on the Ministry of Defence UK land holdings, by parent Service, country, type of use and whether owned, leased or with legal rights at 1 April each year for 2000 to 2020. These holdings include land declared as surplus to defence requirements and does not provide information on overseas Defence estate.

1.2 Background and Context

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) publishes a wide range of statistics with the main purpose to; inform policy and decision making within the Department, to measure the performance of the Ministry of Defence against Government and Parliament targets, and also to inform general debate in Government, Parliament and the wider public.

MOD is one of the largest landowners in the country, with an estate approximately equal to 1.8% of the UK land mass. The estate is critical to the effectiveness of the Armed Forces. It is used for training and accommodation and provides a base from which operations can be instigated. The MOD has published land holdings and building statistics since 1981.

This background quality report covers the Land Holdings publication published on the Defence Statistics website on GOV.UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/mod-land-holdings-bulletin-index>³

1.3 Methodology and Production

The statistics on land holdings are published annually and provide land holdings in thousands of hectares by parent Service, country and type of use and in each case, whether MOD owns, has leased or has legal rights. Data is provided from administrative systems in the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO). All the tables in this publication are National Statistics.

The land holding figures are derived from the DIO Infrastructure Management System (IMS) which was developed and has been used since 2014. It is a live database which is continuously updated with the most up to date information and is now the main data gathering system within DIO. The IMS contains information on all property assets that are owned, occupied or over which the MOD hold rights. The areas of each property are calculated from computerised mapping to provide the most accurate representation of the size of the Defence Estate.

An extract is taken from IMS and stored within DIO's Data Warehouse. The extracts are currently taken and put through a series of validation checks based upon previous extracts. As a result of these checks, if appropriate, some edits may be made to the data to ensure the basic quality of the data. The data is then made available to the Data, Analytics & Insight team where they undertake further checks, using their expert knowledge and experience. Once the data is confirmed the database is queried to produce the range of tables. These tables undergo several rounds of checking and scrutiny to ensure the outputs are accurate before being published. Percentages are calculated from the unrounded data and presented to one decimal place. Additionally, totals and sub-totals are rounded separately and so may not equal the sums of their rounded parts.

Whilst the following information is included within the main report it is included here for consistency purposes (all are applicable from 2011):

The figures in the publication have a number of notable inclusions and exclusions (all are applicable from 2011):

- The figures presented include land occupied by all MOD TLB holders (including United States Visiting Forces (USVF) occupied sites); all Trading Funds and Agencies (including Defence Support Group, Defence Science & Technology Laboratory (DSTL) and the Hydrographic Office).
- Civil estate (for example offices) owned by MOD but could be leased to other Government Departments is included in the figures.
- However, Civil estate which is owned by MOD, but is currently being used by another Government Department (and not at all by MOD) is excluded.
- The reserve (or volunteer) estate is now included from 2016, this is due to a data quality improvement. Comparable figures for earlier years are not available.
- The Rights figures for England & Scotland include those agreements where Training on Private Land (ToPL) has been formalised with the landowner through a legal Agreement. In Wales significant amounts of ToPL occurs on an informal agreement basis so these figures are not included. As most of the land held under Rights agreements is used for training which is driven by operational requirements, the extent of Rights held can vary significantly from year to year.
- Changes to the estate which have not been captured on IMS by the time the data is extracted for this publication are not included. If any of these changes to estate occur and are not originally captured the figures will be revised at the earliest opportunity.
- Due to the way the data is held in the IMS, it is no longer possible to show the extent of foreshore held by the MOD. Therefore, separate figures for this are no longer shown but are included in the totals provided.

2. Relevance

This publication is the primary means by which information on the MOD's Land Holdings is made widely available to academics, media, and general users. These statistics are used to inform and measure MOD Land Holdings and gain insight into further areas such as, size and condition of the MOD estate, assist in understanding the impact of initiatives and policy on MOD estate, and set the context for other information on Defence. They are also used to answer parliamentary questions and Freedom of Information requests.

For information on pre-release access to the publications please see the Defence Statistics pre-release access list web-page: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/defence-statistics-pre-release-access-list>⁵ people in the roles with access receive pre-release access to the publication up to 24 hours in advance of the publication.

Public accountability requires that MOD should account for its assets as well as knowing where they are and how they are used. Although internal systems may be sufficient for internal use, publication as a statistical publication makes this information available publicly, regularly and as a time series. The tables include definitions and other information, so that the data are set in context and can be understood by a lay audience as well as those with professional interests.

3. Accuracy

The data in these tables have been extracted from a MOD database, the IMS, which is currently considered to be reliable and there are no significant concerns over the accuracy of data. The information in this publication, and the accompanying supplementary tables, have been taken from the Infrastructure Management System (IMS). IMS was implemented by DIO in 2014 as a mechanism to more effectively manage the defence infrastructure. Prior to the implementation of IMS, an asset verification exercise took place to capture accurately the defence estate. DIO have a clear process to ensure that IMS is updated with any changes to the estate, so the information about the defence estate is reflective of the current situation. However administrative data, more generally, can be subject to data capture errors such as lags to changes in data, or typing errors. If any revisions are required to the data, they will be made at the earliest opportunity.

In addition to being manually sense-checked by DIO staff who have carried out the data extraction and collation, the figures are also reviewed by a subject matter expert. The data in these tables have also been subjected to a sense-check by Government Statisticians.

4. Timeliness and Punctuality

As a National Statistic, the release date for this publication was pre-announced on the [MOD's Calendar of Upcoming Releases](#)² section of GOV.UK in accordance with the guidance set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

In 2017 data was extracted 5 calendar days after the 1st of the month. This was to allow for any lags to changes in data.

5. Accessibility and Clarity

The report is published on the [MOD Land Holdings page](#)³ on GOV.UK as a PDF document. The tables are available as an OpenDocument Spreadsheet (ODS) file to enable the figures to be reused. Within the tables there is further information to clarify definitions, advise users of caveats in the data and explain changes since previous years.

The background information section assists with the accessibility and clarity of this bulletin by setting out the context of the statistics, providing definitions and explanations of the terms used and giving some brief information on methods and data quality.

6. Coherence and Comparability

The data tables cover the years 2000 to 2020.

The statistics presented show both overall UK land holdings and the holdings for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland separately. This publication does not offer any comparisons with holdings elsewhere and no demand for such comparisons has been identified. The form of the data allows users to make comparisons (e.g. international comparisons, comparisons to other land users) themselves.

7. Trade-offs between Output Quality Components

The process for collating information requires substantial checking and includes approval by the DIO board. Although the data is requested early, it is often not finalised until close to the publication date and could not be published earlier. However, DIO have brought the release date forward from August to May over the last five years.

8. Assessment of User Needs and Perceptions

The MOD has previously held regular consultation meetings with users of Defence Official Statistics, which provided a forum for user feedback on their needs and perceptions. Proposed changes were set out at the consultation meetings in order to gain feedback from both internal and external users. More recently in April 2016, a [public consultation](#) was held on the MOD's Statistics Plan. The MOD invites users to provide feedback to the statistical output teams on any of their publications or reports using the contact information on the front of the publication.

9. Performance, Cost and Respondent Burden

The outputs are produced from the administrative data provided by the DIO. The benefit of the MOD publishing the data on land holdings is that these administrative data are placed in the public domain, and as National Statistics, in a way that ensures their independence from political interference and adherence to quality standards. The small burden that this places on the data suppliers is considered to be worthwhile to achieve this, and the consequent public accountability provided by their publication.

10. Confidentiality, Transparency and Security

All staff involved in the production process have signed the Data Protection Act and all MOD, Civil Service and data protection regulations are adhered to. All data are stored, accessed and analysed using the MOD's restricted network and IT systems.

We adhere to the principles and protocols laid out in the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#)⁴ and comply with pre-release access arrangements. The [Pre-Release Access List](#)⁵ is available online.

11. References

	Reference	Website Location
1	Statistics at MOD Homepage	https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-defence/about/statistics
2	MOD's Timetable of Future Releases	https://www.gov.uk/search/research-and-statistics?content_store_document_type=upcoming_statistics&keywords=&level_one_taxon=&organisations%5B%5D=ministry-of-defence&public_timestamp%5Bfrom%5D=&public_timestamp%5To%5D=
3	Publication homepage on GOV.UK	https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/mod-land-holdings-bulletin-index
4	Code of Practice for Official Statistics	https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Code-of-Practice-for-Statistics.pdf
5	Defence Statistics Pre-release Access lists	https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/defence-statistics-pre-release-access-list

Contact details

This publication has been produced by the Data, Analytics and Insight team in Defence Infrastructure Organisation.

We welcome feedback on our statistical products. If you have any comments or questions about this publication or about our statistics in general, you can contact us as follows:

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