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Group of Experts on Business Registers

Sixteenth session

Online, 26 - 29 September 2022

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda and election of officers

Annotated provisional agenda for the sixteenth session

To be held online from 26 to 29 September 2022.

I. Provisional agenda

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II. Annotations to the provisional agenda

Item 1. Adoption of the agenda and election of officers

1. The meeting is organized following a decision of the Conference of European Statisticians in June 2022 (ECE/CES/2022/15) and the recommendation of the previous meeting of the Group of Experts on Business Registers, which was held on 30 September – 2 October 2019 (ECE/CES/GE.42/2019/2).



Item 2. Classifications and identifiers in the statistical business registers

2. The purpose of this item is to discuss the identification and classification of statistical units in the statistical business registers (SBR), principles and methods, and practical experiences. It will discuss the challenges with the identification and classification of statistical units, in particular those that pose measurement challenges, e.g., special purpose entities, factoryless goods producers, and others. The session will include a progress report of the UN Expert Group on International Statistical Classifications to inform about the update of the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC), Revision 4. Thus, sharing of plans and strategies for the implementation of the revised economic classification, including the use of new technologies and methods for automatic classification would also be welcome.

Item 3. The use of administrative data, big data, and other data sources

3. Administrative registers give access to detailed information that can be used to improve the coverage and quality of the SBR and reduce response burden. The challenges in using administrative data include issues with coverage and definitions, which may not be in line with the statistical requirements, timeliness and in some instances confidentiality. Presentations under this item will share experiences on using administrative data sources, including on how to establish good cooperation with the owners of administrative data; how to derive statistical units based on administrative, legal units; how to match and link information across registers, data sources; how to deal with conflicting information and assess the quality of administrative data for statistical purposes; metadata management; and legal and confidentiality issues.

Item 4. Using the statistical business registers to produce business statistics

4. Business demography and entrepreneurship statistics can be produced directly from the SBR or by combining information from the SBR with information from other sources, e.g. administrative registers, survey data or other statistical registers. Key to this type of work is the availability of suitable identifiers across data sources and longitudinal information. This item will include practical experiences on producing business demography based on the SBR and practical approaches to identify the characteristics and the demographic changes of statistical units. Analysis of the effects of using different statistical units in business demography; examples of producing entrepreneurship statistics by combining information from the SBR with social and/or population data and combining SBR data with trade or foreign direct investment data.

Item 5. Modernization of the statistical business registers

5. As a backbone for the production of economic statistics, the SBR is crucial for the modernisation of the statistical production; for the coordination and integration of data from different data sources, for the development of efficient statistical production processes, and for ensuring coherence across statistical outputs. This item will include experiences from countries on the development of integrated production of statistics, including challenges with using the SBR for analysis and data integration; the development of business architecture to improve production efficiency and coherence of statistical products; examples of quality management frameworks; microdata sharing within and between statistical offices; sharing of good practices on linking of microdata; technical and statistical standardisation for SBRs; cost/benefit analyses; and integration of SBR into data warehouse systems.

Item 6. Country Progress Reports

6. This item will present the outcome of the 2021 Country Progress Reports on statistical business registers. The session will focus on progress and challenges experienced by countries in their work with the statistical business register in 2021.

Item 7. Statistical business registers and the Covid-19 pandemic

7. The lockdown that followed the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 posed unprecedented challenges to producing official statistics. In many countries, different sectors of the economy were temporarily closed, data collection disrupted or severely hampered and, in some instances, staff in statistical offices were not able or allowed to work or were asked to work remotely. This made it difficult to maintain the regular production of statistics, including the SBR. In many cases, the usual statistical operations could not be carried out and the lack of data raised methodological and conceptual challenges in the calculation of the statistics and made it necessary to implement new procedures and data sources. Presentations under this item will share experiences learned during the pandemic in maintaining the production of the SBR, utilizing alternative data sources, meeting user needs, and good practices in building more resilient SBR production systems.

Item 8. Globalisation and multinational enterprise groups

8. Economic globalisation is a major challenge for economic statistics. It is accompanied by the development of global production arrangements and increasingly complex enterprise group structures, where the challenge of the SBR is to collect and provide coherent and relevant information in a continuously changing world. This item will discuss issues such as the requirements for the SBR to deal with economic globalisation; are the current statistical units adequate for measuring still more global production arrangements and globalisation effects; linkages of enterprises across borders and their foreign affiliates; the recording of MNEs in SBRs; profiling of multinational enterprise groups; alignment with the international statistical standards (eg., National Accounts and Balance of Payments); introducing new variables on globalization and deriving indicators on the economic impact of globalization.

Item 9. The digital economy and the statistical business registers

9. The continuing digitalisation impacts the way work and production is organised and measuring the digital economy is one of the priority areas in the updating of the 2008 SNA. New terms such as, e.g., platform work, telework and the gig economy have been coined to catch different aspects of the digitalisation, and there is a growing interest by policymakers in statistics on the digital economy. Contributions for this topic are invited to discuss conceptual issues and measurement challenges, e.g., how to identify and record digital economy business units in the SBR; and how the SBR can help to get a better grasp of the digital economy.

Item 10. Future work and adoption of the report

10. In this session, the proposals for future work will be presented and discussed. The report containing main decisions of the meeting will be put for adoption.
