

Using Administrative Data for Purpose of Official Statistics in China

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I. Basic framework of China official statistics

1. China official statistics are processed from two major statistical systems: One is “Integrated Statistical System”. Another is “Government Department Statistical System”.

2. Integrated Statistical System comprises of statistical bureaus under governments at all levels (NBS under central government, provincial statistical bureaus under provincial<municipality and autonomous region> governments, prefecture statistical bureaus under prefecture governments, and county statistical bureaus under county governments).Of this system, an administrative principle of “Centralized leadership and decentralized responsibility” apply. There are 21,000 staffs are in NBS and NBS Survey Offices, and 62,000 staffs in Statistical Bureaus under local governments at all levels.

3. NBS excises leadership, in terms of expertise, over Statistical Bureaus under local governments at all levels.

4. Local government has the authority over the same-level Head of Statistical Bureau, and next higher-level government Statistical Bureau provides assistance in excising such authority. That is: making appointment is the responsibility of local government, but such appointment should be approved by the next higher level government Statistical Bureau. Management on staff at levels lower than the head falls in the authority of the same-level government.

5. For budget to Statistical Bureaus under local governments, about 20% of it is by NBS. These Statistical Bureaus should undertake certain amount of statistical work assigned by the NBS.

6. NBS has a system of Survey Offices scattered in 31 Provinces and 887 Counties (with 19,600 staffs), all under its direct leadership. In this system, the principle of “Unified administration, Direct Leadership” applies. Appointment of staffs, statistical business, and budget are all done under unified administration by NBS.

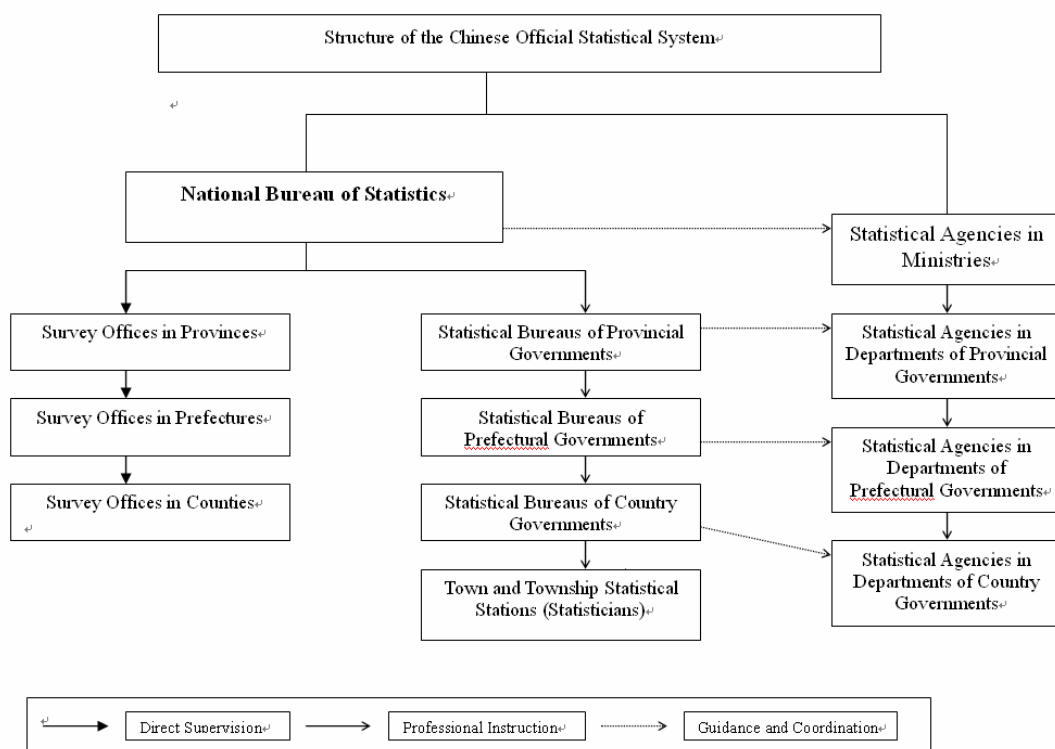
7. “Government Department Statistical System” comprises of statistical organizations set up by central government departments and local government departments, and the statistical staffs in such organizations.

- (1) Under the “Government Department Statistical System”, Ministries and departments which provides comparatively complete statistical data for national accounts are: Ministry of Finance (statistics on finance), People’s Bank of China

(statistics on monetary and international balance of payments), General Administration of Customs (statistics on imports and exports), Ministry of Commerce (statistics on foreign investment), Ministry of Education (statistics on education), Ministry of Culture (statistics on culture), Ministry of Public Health (statistics on health and sanitation), General Administration of Sport (statistics on sport), Ministry of Environmental Protection (statistics on environmental protection), National Tourism Administration (statistics on tourism), Ministry of Justice (justice statistics), Ministry of Land and Resources (statistics on geological prospecting)

- (2) NBS gives guidance to statistical organizations under central government department, to examine, approve, and coordinate their statistical investigations. Likewise, statistical bureaus of local governments give guidance to statistical organizations under local government departments, and to examine, approve, and coordinate their statistical investigations.
- (3) Appointments staffs and budget are the responsibility of corresponding government departments.

For details, see Table 1.



II. Current statues of using administrative data for official statistical purpose in China

It is an important issue to use administrative data for statistical purpose, and also a major issue in statistical reform.

1. There is a legal base in China for the use of administrative data for statistical purpose. It is clearly provided by the *Statistics Law of the People's Republic of*

China that it is not permitted to be recollected by official statistics, if there is related administrative data.

2. Use of administrative data for official statistics purpose is on the increasing trend. Quite a number of indicators and statistics are based on the good use of administrative data.
3. Currently, administrative data that are mostly used by official statistics organizations are statistics of customs, financial and monetary affairs, population registration, social institutions, and basic unit directory of enterprises and institutions. For details see Table below:

Table 2: Use of Administrative data for official statistics purpose

Serial No.	Administrative data	Organizations preparing the data	Use for official statistics purpose
1	Basic unit directory of enterprises and institutions	General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine、 National Commission for Public Sector Reform、 Ministry of Civil Affairs 、 State Administration of Taxation、 State Administration for Industry and Commerce	develop a database of basic unit directory, for census and sample survey
2	Data on customs declaration	General Administration of Customs	Import and export statistics, national accounting
3	Number of People cleared by customs	General Administration of Customs	Statistics on inbound and outbound tourists
4	Annual review on business license to commercial bank and financial institutions '	People's Bank of China 、 China Banking Regulatory Commission	Monetary statistics, national accounting、
5	insurance business	China Insurance Regulatory Commission	Financial statistics, insurance statistics, national accounting
6	Annual review on business license to securities business	China Securities Regulatory Commission	Financial statistics, securities statistics, national accounting
7	Data on financial estimates and final accounts	Ministry of Finance	financial statistics, national accounting
8	Taxation records	State Administration of Taxation	financial statistics, national

			accounting
9	balance of foreign exchange	State Administration of Foreign Exchange	Balance of international payments, national accounting
10	Administrative data on social affairs management	Ministry of Education, Ministry of Public Health, 、Ministry of Culture、State Administration of Radio, Film and Television, Ministry of Public Security, Ministry 、Supreme People's Procuratorate, 、Supreme People's Court、All-China Women's Federation	Education, public health, culture (including radio, film, TV, press, and publication) ,sport, public security, procuratorate, justice, the handicapped, women and Children 、social involvement, national accounting
11	Population and household register	Ministry of Public Security	Population statistics
12	Business license registration of wholesale and retail of finished oil	Ministry of Commerce	statistics on whole sale and retail of processing oil

III. Problems confronting China official statistical system in its use of administrative data

- Two major problems confronting China official statistical system in its use of administrative data:
 - (4) **One:** Standards inconsistent. Standards on administrative data by some government department are inconsistent with international statistics standards, while standards on administrative data by some other government departments are inconsistent with China's statistics standards.
 - (5) **Two:** Not positive in cooperation. Some government departments are not enthusiastic in providing administrative data, especially when the data standards are inconsistent with statistical standards, or when the data are very sensitive.
- Of the issue of inconsistent standards, a solution could be made in the following measure: **One:** Modify administrative data before use. For example, when the frequency of administrative data is inconsistent with that of statistics, modification and estimation are used to make the data standards consistent with that of statistics; **Two:** When administrative data on a specific industry can be acquired from two or more than two organizations, a long time comparison is to be made, and to choose the data that is more reliable; **Three:** Using administrative data as a reference indicator, to estimate or calculate statistical indicators.
- For a solution to the issue that is not positive in cooperation, regular and irregular visit, open house gathering, statistical training, and exchanging information are to be taken to promote communication and deliberation with relevant government department. Statistical organizations under government departments are not very

authoritative, and therefore, to this day legal means have not been used to acquire administrative data.

4. About the quality of administrative data, because of fast economic growth, government departments have all taken new measures to modify administrative data both in subject and means of collection, so as to present economic growth. As a result, the timeliness, accuracy, and integrity are constantly improving, and data quality are greatly improved. Comparatively speaking, administrative data from department of finance, monetary, customs, taxation, and industry and commerce administration are of higher quality and are up to the statistical standards and able to meet statistical requirement. Administrative data other than these fall short of requirement in terms of scope, frequency, and definition.
5. Furthermore, further efforts are required in coordination of using administrative data.

IV. Outlook and suggestions on the use of administrative data for official statistics in China

1. Strong supply. With the advancement of informationization and networking, a great amount of data information in government department are recorded and stored up digitally. This is a ground work for official statistics.
2. Strong demand. To reduce cost, to lighten the burden of respondents, and for solving the issue of data quality down-sliding due to less positive cooperation on the side of the public, it is necessary to make a good use administrative data.
3. Official statistics departments have already gained an understanding on the benefits of making a good use of administrative data, and are eager to take positive steps and make use of administrative data.
4. There are experiences gained and lessons learned in the use of administrative data.
5. Future is bright in use of administrative data. Official statistics departments should be more aggressive in use of administrative data for official statistical purpose.
6. The following measures are required if to make a good use of administrative data:
 - (1) Put forward a provision for amending the *Statistics Law of the people's Republic of China*, or the *Detailed Rules for Implementation of Statistical Law of the people's Republic of China*, to clarify further that, if necessary

and if the administrative data have nothing to do with state secret, as a major part of official statistics, administrative data must be provided to official statistics department

- (2) Intensify deliberation and exchange among government departments
- (3) Further enhance the authority of National Bureau of Statistics and its function of coordination
- (4) Official statistics department should conduct training, provide assistance in working out indicators and setting standards, in an aim to improve administrative data in terms of contents and methods, and statistical standards.
- (5) Advance information sharing and maintain administrative data's consistency and uniqueness (no overlap) through a conventional information exchange and sharing system or a networking information exchange and sharing system.
- (6) Strengthen international cooperation; take reference from advance practice and theory by official statistics overseas.