

NATIONAL PRACTISES AND ISSUES RELATED TO THE COMPILATION OF ECONOMIC STATISTICS

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Country Presentation

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Introduction

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) was officially launched as an Executive Agency on 26th March 1999. It is the only agency in Tanzania mandated to provide official statistics to the Government, business community and the public at large. The transformation from government department to semi autonomy agency geared towards improvement on the performance for the production and dissemination of statistics.

National and regional policy formulation and planning depends on reliable and timely data on Economic Statistics and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) being one of the key measures of economic growth.

The Roles of NBS

The NBS has been mandated to carry out statistical activities in Tanzania mainland in accordance with the statistical Act of 2002. The Act stipulates the NBS roles as follows:

- To provide statistics to the government, business community and general public as well as international organization for use in planning and decision making.
- To provide statistical activities so as to produce statistics that is consistent.

NBS Mission

“To facilitate planning and decision making within the government and the business community, to stimulate research and inform public debate through the provision of relevant, reliable and timely statistics and quality statistical service in general”

- **Main Users**

As it has been indicated above, the government, business community, general public and international organizations like UNSD just to mention a few are the main users of the economic statistics in Tanzania. So it is not the government alone which is in need of the economic statistics but also by a cross-section of organizations and society at large.

- **Users needs of Economic Statistics and their Satisfaction**

The statistics are mainly for planning purposes as well as for policy and decision making which are results based. It cannot be over-emphasized that national policies (NSGPR – MKUKUTA), like all other results-based agenda, require a lot of economic statistics for their execution and sustainability. Based on the economic statistics the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of these policies can be done.

DATA SOURCES AND COLLECTION PROCEDURE

- **Data Sources**

Administrative data and Surveys done under the National Bureau of Statistics are the main source of Economic Statistics in the Country.

- **Compilation Methods**

We normally use the designed questionnaire so as to collect the required information from the reliable sources (administrative) where economic statistics are available. Also sometimes we do sample surveys by picking a sample size from the existing up-to-date list of names and addresses, size and other information (Business register) in order to get the economic statistics we want. Currently the frame of establishment is being updated so as other surveys (distributive trade and Construction surveys) can pick sample from the frame.

Census is the second method used in economic data collection which enhance the baseline frame, from which a sample of enumeration areas may be drawn and all businesses in the area re-listed in advance of the survey. Statistical packages like SPSS, Csprow etc are used to capture and do compile whatever have been collected.

- **Availability of Business Register/CRE**

There is business register but as it has been shown above, it is not reliable and currently it is being updated. Up dated Central Register of Establishment is very important for the economic sample surveys like construction, whole sale and retail trade, hotel and restaurants, etc.

The Central Register of Establishments is a Directory of active registered establishments both private and public in the social and economic sectors of Tanzania Mainland.

An **Establishment** is defined as that economic or service delivery unit which engages under a single control, in one or predominantly one kind of activity at a single location e.g. a mine, a factory, a workshop, etc.

Scope and Coverage

CRE attempts to cover all registered establishments each engaging at least one person and in accordance with the International Standard Industrial classification (ISIC) Rev.3 for standard definitions and classifications. This release is for the establishments engaging 5 or more persons.

The CRE Updating

The updating exercise is continuous involving:

- Addition of new information e.g. change of address, activity, etc
- Addition of new establishments
- Deletion of closed establishments.

The CRE Questionnaire

The questionnaire contains the following variables:

- Full Name of the Establishment
- Mailing Address e.g. Box No, Telephone No, Fax and E-mail No.
- Physical Location of the Establishment by: Region, District and Ward
- Head Office Postal Address
- Date of its first Operation

- Main activity and Auxiliary activities of the establishment
- Type of Ownership
- Number of Employees (temporary + permanent)
- Number of other Workers (Working proprietors, Unpaid family workers and the like)
- Declaration and signature.

The distribution of establishments in Tanzania shows that, Dar Es Salaam region had the highest number of units accounting for 24.7 percent, Kilimanjaro region was second with 7.5 percent followed by Mbeya region 6.9 percent, Mwanza region 6.4 percent. Each of the remaining 17 regions had less than 5 percent contribution.

DISSERMINATION

In fact dissemination is another agenda which needs special attention in the developing countries including Tanzania. Most of the surveys done by the National Bureau of statistics including economic statistics surveys, their final results are printed out and distributed to stakeholders. Also the results are put on the website and some stakeholders are provided these statistics in soft copy.

Sometimes if the fund is available, stakeholders are invited in the workshops to discuss the final outputs (economic statistics, etc) at the national or regional level. Economic statistics are printed yearly in the economic survey book which is prepared jointly by Ministry of Planning, Economy and empowerment and National Bureau of Statistics. Most of the stakeholders need this book for their planning purposes as well as decision making.

NBS as an executive agency is operating on a commercial business. It produces the statistics demanded from the public as well as from private users. The users, including the Government, have to pay for the statistical products. The NBS, as the provider of the publicly funded national statistical service, attaches considerable importance to easy and widespread access by all levels of governments, and the community at large, to the statistics it compiles.

The continued progress of society relies heavily on active and positive participation of its members, be the investors, business executives, employees, NGOs or individuals in the general public, and this in turn relates to how well these parties are

informed on all aspects of the socio –economic situation. Increasingly the need to know is becoming so fundamental to the sustained development of society that this need is gradually perceived as a right by itself. NBS as the Statistical authority is aware of the expectation of society on the right of access to statistical information and adopt a well formulated data dissemination policy. Among the principles proclaimed by the local and international statistical community, maintenance of professionalism and integrity in statistical work are major considerations. For individual economies, greater utilization of data represents a firmer basis for socio-economic development at the macro-level. Apart from general principles, issues considered in this policy include user targeting; user friendliness and a client-based service culture; pricing policy; and promotion of statistical literacy in the community to ensure proper interpretation and application of statistics.

The CRE results are available semi-annually, i.e. January-June and July-December each calendar year in both soft and hard copies. This release refers to January - June 2006.

PROBLEMS DURING THE WHOLE PROCESS

The Statistical balance sheet of the Country so far shows that, the National Statistical System is, in many cases, still weak and vulnerable including economic Statistics. For example the GDP estimates are still at regional level where by for planning purposes it was supposed to be at district level. The quality of administrative data leaves a lot to be desired, some datasets are incomplete and a lot of data are not made available in a friendly and timely manner.

The business register/CRE is the basic tool for the compilation of the economic statistics, but this register should be up-dated now and again due to economic changes happening in the economy. The problem which makes most of the National statistical offices is the shortage of funds to do the required justice to these registers. Sometimes the ownership of the establishments and allocation changes without the government being aware, so it makes difficult when it comes to data collection.