

REGIONAL WORKSHOP FOR CIS COUNTRIES

USE OF ADMINISTRATIVE DATA IN ECONOMIC STATISTICS

United Nations Statistics Division
Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States
Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation

Moscow, Russian Federation, 30 October – 1 November 2006

Report of the Workshop

**Moscow, New York
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I. Purpose of the workshop

The main purpose of the workshop was to deliberate on a number of practical issues of use of administrative data in economic statistics including the update of statistical business registers, methods for obtaining of basic statistical information, strengthening the inter-institutional coordination and establishing the legal frameworks for the access of statistical authorities to administrative information.

The workshop was held at the Conference Hall of the Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation (ROSSTAT) and was opened by the Chairmen of the CIS Interstate Statistical Committee Mr. Mikhail Korolev. In his opening statement Mr. Korolev particularly acknowledged the high relevance of the topic of the workshop for CIS countries as they have predominantly decentralized statistical systems. The effective organization of economic statistics activities under these circumstances requires extensive and efficient use of administrative data. In this context, the exchange of experience on issues related to the use of administrative information is very important and will contribute for clarifying the existing problems and seeking for their solutions.

The Chief of Trade Statistics Branch of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), Mr. Vladimir Markhonko welcomed the participants of the workshop and expressed his appreciation to the management of ROSSTAT and the CIS Interstate Statistical Committee for the excellent cooperation in co-organizing the workshop. Mr. Markhonko expressed also his gratitude to the national statistical offices, other institutions and organizations of the CIS member states for their participation in the workshop. He welcomed the representatives of statistical offices of United Kingdom, Canada and the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) who agreed to share their experience. Mr. Markhonko emphasized that the topic of the workshop reflects both the needs of countries and the integrated approach to economic statistics approved by the UN Statistical Commission.

In his opening statement, Mr. Alexander Kevesh, the Deputy Head of ROSSTAT stressed that the topic of the workshop is of high relevance not only for the CIS member states but also for all countries, working towards the improvement of their statistics. As far as the CIS countries are concerned, the transition from planned to a market economy has led to a fundamental revision of statistical data sources and data collection methods, including a sharp increase in significance of administrative data sources, whose use in the planned economy was negligible. Mr. Kevesh also noted that ROSSTAT has considerable achievements in the use of administrative data sources, however, the legal basis for accessing those needs improvement. In particular, a law on statistics which makes the provisions for the access to administrative data sources has to be adopted. ROSSTAT intends to continue in the future its practice on use of both the administrative data and data obtained through statistical surveys, including economic censuses and sample surveys. Work on strengthening the inter-institutional cooperation will also be continued, aiming at more effective organization and conduct of economic statistics. Prompt attention will be given to the update of statistical business register on the basis of obtained administrative data.

II. Conclusions and recommendations

Participants in the workshop:

General conclusions

1. Welcomed the UNSD initiative to develop and promote an integrated approach to economic statistics and to provide assistance to national statistical offices in its implementation.
2. Concluded that development of practical recommendations on implementation of this approach should be one of priority activities of international organizations' work and that it should be carried out in close consultation with national statistical offices in order to define the problem areas and to take into account the existing country experiences.
3. Agreed that the efficient use of administrative data is an important building block of the integrated approach and considered that the progress in this direction could improve both the quality of economic statistics and the effectiveness of government administration as a whole.
4. Welcomed the UNSD initiative for conducting a series of regional workshops on practical aspects of use of administrative data in economic statistics and considered it helpful that an overview of good international experience in this area be prepared and published.
5. Concluded that it is useful also to publish conclusions and recommendations of the present workshop with the aim of drawing the attention of other government institutions to this issue and of contributing to the solution of problems existing in this area.
6. Found that the establishment of multilateral contacts between representatives of different countries and the information obtained that can be further used in the practical work as one of the most important achievements of the workshop.

Conclusions and recommendations regarding national statistical offices and other government institutions

Improving the programmes on development of national statistics, legal frameworks and inter-institutional cooperation

7. Found it necessary that the role of administrative data sources for economic statistics should be clearly acknowledged and included in the long-term programmes for the development of national statistics as well as the specific action plans for the improvement of their use.
8. Noted the existence of a number of unresolved problems and difficulties in the access to administrative data, and in the same time recognized the important advantages of these data such as their low costs, significant reduction of respondents burden and nearly census coverage of units, which is extremely important, for example, for obtaining statistics on small areas, make them one of the most important directions of improvement in economic statistics.
9. Found that the assessment of quality of administrative data and the development of measures for its enhancement should become constant elements of national programmes on enhancement the quality of economic statistics.
10. Concluded that the national statistical offices should take an active role in establishing the legal frameworks for the access and use of administrative data sources by making proposals for inclusion of explicit texts in the draft legal documents.
11. Noting the need of proper legal frameworks for the access to administrative data, concluded that establishing an atmosphere of "goodwill" is the necessary precondition for the effective and mutually beneficial cooperation between statistical offices, other government institutions and respondents; imposing legal means of pressure on the respondents should be considered as an extreme measure.
12. Concluded that more active work is needed with anonymous administrative data, in order to comply with the established confidentiality laws and, at the same time, solve the problems which statistical offices are facing.
13. Found that the improvement of inter-institutional co-ordination is an important condition for resolving the existing problems, including the elevation of status and the expansion of number of members of inter-institutional statistical councils; a publication of joint executive instructions and a subsequent systematic control of their execution can be an efficient method for implementation of councils' decisions.

14. Advised that it is necessary to bring to the attention of higher government authorities the need for continuous work on the implementation and use of unified or harmonized statistical classifications and identification codes across all government institutions; the establishment of a unified information systems in countries on this basis can be seen as a solid foundation for resolving the existing problems in economic statistics.
15. Concluded it necessary to broaden the spectrum of services provided by national statistical offices to other government institutions. These can include quality assessment of administrative data obtained from them, assistance in correct implementation of various statistical methods and approaches, preparation of analytical studies, etc.
16. Noted the experience with the purchase of administrative data from private companies (for example, the United Kingdom's Office for National Statistics purchases data from Dun and Bradstreet, a private sector business data supplier), which can prove to be the cheaper method for obtaining them; at the same time emphasized that adequate considerations should be given to the problems of quality of such data.
17. Found it necessary to work closely with suppliers of administrative data so that they would change and harmonize their records keeping in accordance with the requirements of the national statistical offices and taking into account the international recommendations on economic statistics, including the recommendations of the system of national accounts.
18. Considered the transition to the electronic form of delivery of administrative data as an important condition for the enhancement of quality and the efficient use of that data.
19. Emphasized the need of observing the principles of priority in the use of administrative data, namely - identification of the most significant sources and focusing the work on them; otherwise it might put at risk the efficient use of resources and improvement of economic statistics quality.
20. Recognized that it is important to organize joint training for the staff of statistical offices and institutions and organizations, providers of administrative data for the achievement of better understanding and strengthening the cooperation.

Statistical business registers and enterprise surveys

21. Concluded that the use of administrative data is the necessary prerequisite for the update of statistical business registers and that the CIS countries are committed to intensify the work in this direction.
22. Concluded that more clearly formulated international recommendations for determining the principal activity of economic units, that exists in the business registers (including the probabilistic approach) should be developed, as well as rules, defining the match of administrative units with statistical units.
23. Found it necessary to work more actively with disclosed book-keeping data, paying special attention to the work with large enterprises and enterprise groups (profiling) and to keep the practice of substituting the data for small and medium enterprises obtained through statistical surveys with data from tax and other administrative sources.

Conclusions and recommendations regarding international organizations

24. Concluded that it is important to continue the exchange of views and experiences on the issues discussed at the workshop; requested the CIS Interstate Statistical Committee and UNSD to undertake the necessary steps towards achieving it. In particular, to continue using the UNSD website created for the purpose of placing the workshop materials.
25. Found it useful to consolidate the country responses to different questionnaires, sent by international organizations and to convey the results of this analysis, together with corresponding comments, to national statistical offices with the aim of exchanging the experience and having country consultations in the periods between the workshops.
26. Considered it useful to explore the possibility that the CIS Interstate Statistical Committee bring the question about the harmonization of terms of access to administrative data sources and the modalities of their use to the higher CIS authorities for their consideration.
27. Suggested that the duration of similar workshops in the future should be extended to four days, so sufficient time will be allowed for more detailed discussions on all agenda items.
28. Expressed the wish for conducting, after some period of time, of a workshop on a similar topic for evaluation and analysis of the progress achieved in this field and for formulating a long-term strategy of work.
29. Requested the UNSD and Canada to prepare a more detailed note on the experience with the organization of access to tax data and their use in economic statistics.

III. Annexes

Annex 1.

AGENDA

9:30 – 12:30

Monday, October 30, Morning session

1. **Registration of participants**
2. **Opening ceremony (*Chair: CIS Statistical Committee*)**
 - UNSD
 - CIS-STAT
 - ROSSTAT
3. **Administrative matters (*Chair: CIS Statistical Committee*)**
4. **Adoption of Agenda (*Chair: CIS Statistical Committee*)**

Coffee break

5. **Use of administrative data in economic statistics: An overview (*Chair: CIS Statistical Committee*)**

UNSD programme of work and the tasks of the workshop - introductory statement (UNSD)

Overview of the current practice of the CIS countries in using administrative data sources in economic statistics (CIS Statistical Committee)

Invited presentations

The use of administrative data for economic statistics. An overview (UK)

Lunch break

14:00 – 17:00

Monday, October 30, Afternoon session

5. Use of administrative data in economic statistics: An overview (continue)
(Chair: CIS Statistical Committee)

Invited presentations

The use of administrative data in economic statistics
(Moldova)

The use of administrative data sources for production of official statistical information
(Tajikistan)

The use of administrative data in economic statistics
(Georgia)

General discussion

Coffee break

6. Legal framework for the statistical use of administrative data and country practices in cooperation between statistical and administrative authorities
(Chair: Rosstat)

Invited presentations

Frameworks for the access and use of administrative data, with the example of current practice in the UK
(UK)

Russian experience on ensuring quality of information obtained from administrative sources
(Russian Federation)

9:00 – 12:30

Tuesday, October 31, Morning session

- 6. Legal framework for the statistical use of administrative data and country practices in cooperation between statistical and administrative authorities (continue)**
(Chair: Rosstat)

Invited presentations

Legal framework and experience of the Ukrainian Statistical Office with other government institutions on the access to administrative data sources and their use for statistical purposes
(Ukraine)

The experience of Uzbekistan Statistical Office in the legal issues of access to administrative data:
(Uzbekistan)

General discussion

Coffee break

- 7. Establishment and maintenance of a business register on the basis of administrative sources. Experiences and challenges**
(Chair: Belarus)

Current practice of compiling and using statistical business registers in the CIS countries: evidence from the UNECE Questionnaire Surveys (1996-2006)
(UNECE)

Invited presentations

Use of administrative data sources for the purpose of business register and enterprise statistics
(Belarus)

Use of administrative data for updating the statistical register
(Kyrgyzstan)

General discussion

Lunch break

14:00 – 17:00

Tuesday, October 31, Afternoon session

- 8. Statistical business register as a central sampling and weighting frame for statistical surveys and as a source for statistics in its own right**
(Chair: Kyrgyzstan)

Invited presentations

The use of tax data in the Unified Enterprise Survey
(Canada)

Statistical business register and the sample surveys organization
(Russian Federation)

About the establishment of administrative registers and the use of their information
(Armenia)

General discussion

Coffee break

- 9. Use of administrative information available in government and private authorities for production of official statistics by economic sectors**
(Chair: Kyrgyzstan)

Invited presentations

Bulgarian experience on the use of administrative data sources for production of official statistics by economic sectors
(Bulgaria/UNSD)

9:00 – 12:30

Wednesday, November 1, Morning session

- 9. Use of administrative information available in government and private authorities for production of official statistics by economic sectors (continue)**
(Chair: Kyrgyzstan)

Invited presentations

Use of official statistical information for analysis and forecasting of VAT
(Azerbaijan)

Statistical data of Tax Authorities in Kazakhstan
(Kazakhstan)

General discussion

Coffee break

- 10. Panel discussion: Towards integrated economic statistics programmes**
(Chair: UNSD)

Introductory statement by UNSD

General discussion

Lunch break

14:00 – 17:00

Wednesday, November 1, Afternoon session

- 11. Summary of the workshop conclusions**
(Chair: UNSD)

CIS-STAT
Rosstat
UNSD

- 12. Evaluation of the workshop**

- 13. Concluding ceremony**

Annex 2.

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