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Use of administrative data for production of business register in Georgia

Administrative data are very important for update of business register, at the same time, use of data from administrative sources is an obvious alternative to data collection from respondents, but quality of administrative data is also very important, as in business register Geostat collects approximately 25 variables and 80% of which comes from administrative sources;

The access to data from administrative sources for statistical purposes is granted to the Geostat by the law "On Official Statistics of Georgia" and by special government decrees which was approved in February 2011 and oblige other public institutions to cooperate with the Geostat.

According to the Government Resolution, the Revenue Service (Tax Office) is obliged to submit monthly data to the Geostat on active tax payers (enterprises), which include data on turnover and number of employees for a limited number of active enterprises.

Geostat receives administrative data from National Agency of Public Registry and Revenue Service (Tax Office). Based on received administrative data entities are registered in BR.

The update procedures are automated. The information is received from NAPR and from Revenue Service monthly using automatic interfaces that the Geostat has with the databases of these institutions. The received data is cleansed and structured. The statuses for the companies are identified.

From Public Registry Geostat receives information about newly registered and liquidated (closed) companies, also information on changes. From Revenue Service (Tax Office) Geostat receives information on active taxpayers.

In database received from administrative sources, actual address and kind of economic activities are indicated only for limited number of enterprises. Sometimes indicated information on

economic activities are incorrect, which is huge problem for business register and for production of business statistics.

That's why Geostat conducts every month computer assisted telephone interviews (CATI) for the companies in the business register to update information about status, kind of economic activities and actual addresses by each local units of the companies.

High quality of statistical products in most cases is received by combining administrative and survey data. Therefore Geostat conducts specific surveys and investigations on regular basis, which are used for update of register.

Geostat assess regularly applicability of administrative sources for the production of statistics. Besides update of business register, administrative sources are used for production of demographic statistics, transport statistics, construction statistics, external trade and Foreign Direct Investments statistics, education and social protection statistics etc.

Role of Business Register is huge, because all business surveys are based on the business register and Geostat uses only one sampling frame for all business surveys; In addition the business register is continuously updated during the year and the structural data and all statistical information are integrated;

Some issues are still challenging. Of which quality of data, methodology and not sufficient recourses are in the top of the list.

In terms of quality of statistical data, which is very essential, it is necessary to pay particular attention to the quality of administrative sources, as well as to take into account international standards, recommendations and experience of developed countries.

It is also important to investigate requirements of data users; asses data sources, use more and more administrative data for production of business register and identify challenges as well as approaches to face current problems.

In terms of methodology - differences between administrative and statistical processes, namely: definition for status (enterprise is active or non-active); in some cases there are differences between methodology - for calculation some variables (turnover, wage).

In terms of not sufficient recourses - it should be mentioned that economic census has never been carried out in Georgia, because of not sufficient financial recourses. Also not enough experts working on BR is challenging: 7 persons are working on BR, however it's necessary to enlarge number of statisticians, who will work on maintenance of BR and for improve its quality.

Activities for the development of BR in Georgia started a few years ago, with its evaluation and identification of gaps and specific problems.

There was a need to engage international experts in the above-mentioned activities, in order to take into account international recommendations and standards.

In this regard cooperation with Statistics Sweden is noteworthy, which greatly contributed to the development of Business Registers. As a result of cooperation with experts from statistics Sweden maintenance strategy has been developed, which covers the following aspects: use of administrative sources, use of survey results, needs of users, planning of the updates and rules for dealing with BR information.

At the moment we have Improved access on administrative sources, complete metadata on business register, new database and structure, new software, new procedures for updating of business register , and improved knowledge of staff.

Since December 2015, Statistical Business register is available online on Geostat's web-page and is accessible free of charge for any interested users. At the moment data is available only in Georgian language, however English version is under construction and will be available in the nearest future.