Norbert Rainer
Statistics Austria
Session No. 4

Quality and coverage

Measures for ensuring the quality of the classification codes

in the Austrian Statistical Business Register

Abstract

Ensuring a high quality of the classification codes in the statistical business registers is one of the main quality challenges. Usually there are at least two statistical classifications that are implemented in the business registers: the activity classification and the classification of the institutional sectors. Both classifications are partly connected but are of different nature, so that different maintenance strategies are needed.

It could be stated that the activity classification is more important than the sector classification, as the activity classification is central for sampling, reporting obligations and for the results of economic statistics which are usually presented by economic activities. Thus, wrong activity codes have a direct influence on the quality of the statistical results. The main challenges for the sector classifications lie specifically in the correct attribution to the financial, government and non-profit sector.

In our view the coding of the statistical units is primarily a task of the NSI, and it should preferably be done in collaboration with the respective unit (enterprise). Administrative information might be of help, but are normally less reliable. The principles for the coding are complex and certain information is needed to apply them adequately.

The paper will provide an overview of general approaches and methodologies for the coding task that are currently applied in Austria and of the measures to ensure high quality. The paper will also describe the cooperation within Statistics Austria and with the National Bank concerning the coding of the statistical units.