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Business Demography and Data Products from the Business Register

The Swiss SBR, administrative data and the production of business statistic data

Abstract

Driven by the need to reduce production costs by decreasing the burden on respondents and given the increased need of information, the Swiss Federal Statistical Office (FSO) is moving from a traditional, questionnaire-based production of business statistics to an integrated system, based on the statistical business register (SBR) as well as on various administrative data, which are also used for the estimation and plausibilisation of data as well as a tool to control the quality of the register units.

The challenge in this context was to develop a centralised system for the preparation of micro-data, based on the content of the SBR and on administrative data, for the production and analysis of business statistics. After three years of intense efforts the first Statistic on the Structure of Business (STATENT) were published in mid-November 2013, bringing to an end not only the work of conceptualisation and integration but also demonstrating the viability of the concepts in concrete terms.

Like a jigsaw puzzle, the modernisation of the business statistics involved the collection and integration of data from the SBR, the National Buildings and Dwellings Register (RBD), the Register of Business Identification Numbers (IDE), the Profiling, cantonal agricultural registers, the Old Age and Survivors Insurance funds (AHV/AVS), the Federal Tax Administration as well as surveys for updating the SBR, the National Classification of Economic Activities (NOGA), and finally the Employment Statistics(ES), to create a picture that would be qualitatively coherent and utilisable for statistical production.

After this first phase, the development of the centralised system continued with the use of new administrative sources and the additional production of integrated statistical data. The newly integrated customs declarations will provide information, among others, on the imported and exported goods, their value, their origin and destination etc. and thus make possible, in combination with other data from the integrated system, the production of the Foreign Affiliate Statistics (FATS). For the first time this year the FSO is also going to publish the business demography statistics based on the SBR and administrative data. Sine qua non condition for this evolution is the unavoidable harmonisation of metadata through all the concerned data as well as the widespread implementation of unique identifiers for enterprises.