

## The Survey Frame

Many business tendency surveys are carried out by chambers of commerce or employers' associations and use their membership list as the survey frame. Such surveys can only provide information about the enterprises that belong to the association and their use for monitoring developments in the entire enterprise sector depends on the extent to which the member enterprises are representative of the enterprise sector as a whole. In practice, many surveys based on membership lists have been shown to provide reliable information on movements in total output or industrial production, but the recommendation of this *Manual* is that business tendency surveys should use as their survey frame comprehensive *business registers* of the kind that national statistical agencies maintain for their regular enterprise surveys.

Business registers usually record the addresses and contact details of *enterprises*, whether corporate or unincorporated, list their main *kind of economic activity* and give some measure of their *size* – usually the number of employees. Business registers may also contain information on the different establishments owned by each enterprise, which may be located in different parts of the country and which may be involved in different kinds of activity. Establishing a business register and keeping it up-to-date by adding new enterprises and eliminating those that have ceased operations, is a major task in most statistical offices, but it is not the subject of this *Manual*. A good summary of best practices in designing and maintaining business registers is given in the OECD handbook on measuring non-observed activities.<sup>1</sup>; more detailed guidance is available in Eurostat publications<sup>2</sup> Here we assume that there is a reasonably comprehensive business register and that, at a minimum, it contains information on the addresses of enterprises, their main kinds of activity and their approximate size.

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1. *Measuring the Non-Observed Economy*, (see section 6.6) OECD, Paris, 2002.
  2. *Business Registers for Statistical Purposes: Methodological Recommendations*, Eurostat, Luxembourg, 1996 and *Business Register Recommendations Manual*, Eurostat, Luxembourg, December 2001.