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The creation of a unique enterprise number in Switzerland

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Like other countries in Europe, the Swiss government decided in 2006 to introduce a unique enterprise identification number (UID) in Switzerland. As there are no administrative registers covering all enterprises in the country, the Federal Statistical Office was given the task of introducing this identification number based on the its Business Register (BUR). This mix of administrative tasks and statistical data entails several challenges but also a number of opportunities for the BUR. The most important challenges are the development of a legal foundation, different definitions of an enterprise depending on the administrative task, data protection, the introduction of the UID in all administrative registers in Switzerland and guaranteeing that the data are correct. This paper discusses the current state of the UID project as well as proposed solutions to a variety of problems.