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Country: Slovenia

Institution: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SORS)

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1. Organization and Population of the Business Registers

The Slovenian Statistical Business Register (SBR) is placed in the Statistical Business Register and Business Demography Department. This department is part of the Sector for External Trade Statistics, Structural Business Statistics, Classifications and Business Register.

The Statistical Business Register and Business Demography Department mostly focuses on the development and maintenance of the SBR, the Enterprise Group Register, business demography, surveys related to the business population such as the Factor of Business Success and introduction of economic classifications to the SBR domain. At the sector level there are 28 employees, 10 of whom are employed in the Statistical Business Register and Business Demography Department.

The SBR is set up as an analytical database which is updated twice a year as a combination of mainly administrative and statistical data. Missing data are imputed based on the appropriate statistical methodology. The main source of data for the SBR is the Administrative Business Register (ABR), which was set up and maintained by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SORS) until July 2002 and is a good source of data for legal units and administrative local units. The ABR is daily updated with the data of primarily registration bodies. In fact it represents the central transactional database of all business entities that are registered at more than 100 registration points all over the country.

The main units in the SBR are legal units (174,000), active enterprises (142,000), active local kind of activity units (153,000), multinational enterprise groups (2,200) and resident enterprise groups (1,900) with all the required variables from the EU Regulation on Business Registers. The units in the register cover all sectors of NACE activities, private as well as public units without any thresholds.

The SBR represents the input for the preparation of the annual survey frame, SBS and other relevant statistics.

2. Progress and Developments in the Past Year

In the past year the main activities in the domain of the SBR were: Introduction of NACE Rev. 2 to the SBR and Setting up a sub-project of SBR modernization as a part of the main project of modernization of the Business Statistics domain.

2.1 Introduction of NACE Rev. 2 to the SBR

The whole project of implementation of NACE Rev. 2 was in our office divided into several stages due to the complexity of the necessary actions involved. 61% of units were able to transform automatically from NACE Rev. 1.1. to NACE Rev. 2, while 39% of units could not be transformed automatically.

Due to the extensiveness of the work, in the beginning of 2007 SORS decided to perform a part of the reclassification of units of the SBR in close cooperation with one of our authorized producers of statistics, Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Public Legal Records and Related Services (AJPES), which is legally responsible for the Administrative Business Register that had to be reclassified to the new NACE classification as well.

SORS decided that the most appropriate solution for non-automatic reclassification of units would be to substitute a paper survey with an electronic survey, which is in practice more efficient and less costly. In the field of electronic surveys SORS has neither enough experience nor appropriate software solutions. In this field AJPES is already carrying out a large statistical survey in the field of labour market in electronic form for the purpose of SORS and has considerable expertise in the mentioned field of collecting the data in electronic way (annual accounts).

Both institutions were actively involved in the methodological designing of the electronic questionnaire for the qualitative reclassification. In this respect the simplicity and user-friendly approach were considered. AJPES programmed the e-questionnaires for units where the automatic transformation of the main activity code to the new NACE was not possible and carried out the e-survey, sent reminders to units in consideration and dealt with non-respondents.

The survey started at the beginning of September 2007 and ended in the middle of December. All units in consideration were informed about the obligation to recode their main activity codes to NACE Rev. 2 with the assistance of the e-questionnaire which was installed at the AJPES website. For security reasons, units in consideration received a special unique code that enabled them to enter the web application. Since AJPES operates through regional offices, the assistance of their clerks in the process of reclassification was at their disposal all time during the reclassification process. Since the survey started at the beginning of September, the first deadline for response was set up for the end of September 2007. At that time the response rate was 38%. Later on the deadline was extended by a month and at the end AJPES contacted the non-respondents by telephone. All those actions increased the response rate to about 70%. Nevertheless, it was not possible to make contact with some units. Those units were reclassified on the basis of the provisional conversion matrix (prepared by SORS) or available (mainly administrative) data.

If SORS carried out the statistical survey, its benefit could be made only for statistics, since SORS is by the National Statistics Act not allowed to share statistical data for administrative purposes. In this way of cooperation both registers (SBR and ABR) had considerable benefits. From the enterprises' point of view it is important that they received when necessary only one questionnaire but their answers were used for several purposes.

2.2 Project of SBR modernization

The project of SBR modernization includes the development of software applications for transaction management of a database of mandatory (obligatory) units pertaining to the statistical business registers in line with the European and national requirements in this area, development of software applications for the definition and preparation of lists of respondents for individual statistical surveys, and upgrade and adaptation (functional inclusion) of the existing software solutions linked to the SBR.

The main scope of work is to design and install the Statistical Business Register which will function as the source of information for all business register statistics and other statistics and as the central source for lists of respondents. A new register will function as a transaction database of statistical units of observation on the basis of available administrative and statistical sources with the possibility to store and use active and historic information on units of observation. The basic modernized functionalities of the register will be: (a) analytical reviews of data (information on enterprises) in the register according to different criteria, (b) compilation of statistical data by units included in the register, (c) central source for definition and preparation of lists of respondents for individual business statistical surveys on the basis of definition of different parameters, processing information and feed-back information from units of observation and taking into account the continuity rules for units of observation. The lists of respondents should be suitable for further processing and storage (active and historic data).

3. Issues solved, problems and future plans

In the field of Introduction of NACE Rev. 2 to the SBR all the activities were successfully implemented. Besides the reclassification on 1st January 2008 the back casting of micro level data in the SBR for the period until 2000 were done as well in 2008, on the basis of the conversion matrix used in the probabilistic models.

Double coding of the SBR for annual data is planned until 2010.

As regards the implementation of the project of SBR modernization the activities are still ongoing as planned. Major problems encountered in this field are based on the technical implementation of methodological specifications that sometimes exceed rational technical possibilities. In this respect sometimes the implementation of processing the historical data for all kinds of events during the lifecycle of units are problematic and the outcome could be a long response time that will have to be solved by close cooperation of IT and methodological staff. It is possible that in the future some advanced methodological expectations should be adapted to technical limitations.