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Regional Workshop on Statistical Business Registers for the Arab Countries

25 - 27 June 2024, Amman, Jordan

CONCEPT NOTE

I. Background

Statistical Business Registers (SBRs) are often described as the backbone of economic statistics, as they provide the core infrastructure to support the collection of economic data and the production of economic statistics. They provide a coherent set of units and classifications to collect and compile data across all domains, and a consistent set of rules to maintain this set of units over time. SBRs are considered as the backbone for producing economic statistics that meet the increasing demand for better integrated, coherent and comparable statistics across countries and statistical domains. Inclusive and exhaustive SBRs is becoming an increasingly more important element of the statistical infrastructure for maintaining the relevance, responsiveness and quality of economic statistics in order to measure the structure and dynamics of economic activity.

The SBR is also a critical element in the transformation of the national statistical system in adopting a responsive, efficient and cost-effective data collection strategy with a response burden as low as possible. This means efforts must be made to modernize the production processes, to use administrative data to reduce survey burden, to redesign survey systems, to harmonize surveys and variables, to comprehensively link administrative data and survey sources, and to cooperate more closely with administrative authorities on a continuous basis to improve the quality of the SBR. Better consistency between the various statistical areas at the national and international level has also become a much more important goal than it was in the past, when economic development was less affected by international dependencies, and globalization of production and markets was at a lower level. Therefore, SBRs play a key role to address current and future needs for economic and business statistics.

To reflect the importance of SBRs, the UN Committee of Experts on Business and Trade Statistics established the Task Team on SBR with the broad objectives to address challenges in developing exhaustive business registers and develop tools to help countries in strengthening the Statistical Business Registers. The task team will focus on further collaborating the elements of the Maturity Model for Statistical Business Registers which provides a framework for evaluating the stages of maturity of the Statistical Business Registers in the seven dimensions that characterize SBRs. These include: Legal and institutional framework; Data sources for the SBR; Maintenance and update of the SBR; Coverage of the SBR; Use of SBR; IT Environment; and Interoperability.

Building on the Workshop on Statistical Business Registers (SBR) in the Arab Countries organized by ESCWA, AITRS, UNSD and UNIDO in 2016, and drawing from the experience of the Regional Course on Statistical Business Registers for the ESCAP region in March 2024, UNSD, ESCWA and AITRS are jointly organizing this regional workshop for Arab countries, with the aim to help participants acquire knowledge and skills to deepens their understanding on the principles and methodology on statistical business registers. The course will review international recommendations and standards on Statistical Business Registers and provide guidance on the implementation of the Maturity Model for Statistical Business Registers. Furthermore, it will address new developments, including the global assessment questionnaire, the implementation of the revised industrial classification systems, the integration of geospatial information, and the global initiative on unique identifiers for businesses. Additionally, the course aims to create a platform that encourages participants engage in peer learning and share country experiences in the establishment and maintenance of Statistical Business Registers, main challenges encountered by countries, and new developments in this area. share knowledge with the region's national statistical authorities on the recently published international guidelines on statistical business register.

II. Organization

This Workshop is jointly organized by the United Nations Statistics Division, United Nations Economic Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the Arab Institute for Training and Research on Statistics (AITRS). It will be held in person from 25 to 27 June 2024 in Amman, Jordan. The Workshop will be conducted in Arabic and English with simultaneous interpretation.

III. Objectives

The Workshop aims to develop the following capacities among the participating countries:

- a) Increased knowledge regarding the development, maintenance and use of SBRs, including the global assessment questionnaire, the implementation of the revised classifications in SBRs, the integration of geospatial information, integration of business and trade, and the unique identifiers for businesses.
- b) Knowledge on the Maturity Model for SBRs, including the use of the accompanying toolkit to conduct self-assessment on the status of development of their business registers and to identify areas of improvement.

IV. Topics for the Agenda

The workshop is comprised of ten sessions, country presentations, discussions and group work to address issues relevant for developing and maintaining the statistical business registers and to assist countries to identify areas for improvements for their SBRs.

Session	Coverage
1. International and regional perspectives on Statistical Business Registers	This session includes an overview of the work programmes at the international and regional levels, with a focus on the ESCWA region. It will also include an introduction to the UN Committee of Experts of Business and Trade Statistics (UNCEBTS) and its Task Teams, and the recent development and output.
2. Introduction to Statistical Business Registers	This session introduces the UN Guidelines on SBR and relevant concepts, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is a Statistical Business Register?• Roles of SBRs• Coverage of SBR• Data sources of SBRs• Units in the SBR• Characteristics of units• Data sources• Maintenance and update of SBR• Survey frame methodology
3. Uses of SBR – Country Examples	This session includes some country presentations on the use of SBR for production of business statistics.
4. SBR Maturity Model	This session introduces the SBR Maturity Model, including its overall design in dimensions and stages, its purpose, and the self-assessment toolkit,
5. New developments in SBRs Group Exercise – SBR Self-Assessment	This session presents the SBR self-assessment toolkit, and provides an opportunity for each participant to make an assessment on the status of development of the SBR in their own country, and to identify areas of improvement.
6. Industrial classification systems	This session presents main concepts and the latest developments in the industrial classification systems

7. New development in SBRs	<p>This session presents the latest developments in SBR, covering the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Global initiative on unique identifiers for businesses - Integration of geospatial information in business registers - Other areas of research (mainstreaming gender statistics in business statistics, integration of business and trade, etc.)
8. Profiling and Global/Regional Registers	<p>This session presents the advanced topic of profiling of business units including the large cases units.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Importance and benefits of profiling - How profiling is performed - Large case units
9. Global/Regional Registers and Manual on Principal Indicators for Business and Trade Statistics	<p>This session covers UNSD-OECD Multinational Enterprise Information Platform (MEIP) and Manual on Principal Indicators for Business and Trade Statistics Vol. 1</p>
10. Key considerations in establishing an SBR	<p>This session discusses the special circumstances and unique challenges for establishing an SBR for countries in the ESCWA region.</p>