

MEETS programme - framework for business-related statistics

Statistics Explained

This article is part of an [online publication](#) presenting the results of the [European Commission](#) programme 'Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics', or MEETS for short, which ran from 2009 to 2013 with the objectives of adjusting European business statistics to new needs and reducing the burden on [enterprises](#) .

The article presents the results for the programme's **second objective** , to achieve a streamlined framework for business-related statistics, which was put into practice through three actions:

- the integration of concepts and methods within the legal framework (action 2.1), to be implemented via projects on consistency;
- the establishment of a Community register of multinational enterprise groups (action 2.2), which should cover the links between units across border;
- the development of [European Union \(EU\)](#) sampling schemes (action 2.3).

Harmonising methodologies used across relevant statistical areas

Action 2.1: Integrating concepts and methods within the legal framework

Until recently, many statistical projects as well as the legal regulations and compulsory methodologies governing such projects were, to some degree, characterised by a certain 'stove-pipe principle', which did not pay much attention to the requirements, concepts and definitions in related statistical areas. Different data definitions and methodologies are in use for trade and business statistics. In addition, as they often deal with cross-cutting issues, there is potential for overlapping and redundancy.

This first action aimed at an increased harmonisation of the methodologies used across the relevant statistical areas. More consistency between all trade and enterprise related statistics will help to increase the analytical potential of the entire system of enterprise statistics, because different statistical information might then be combined in a coherent framework. In addition, more consistency could help to save resources for the NSIs and reduce the response burden on those enterprises providing the source of data.

Consistency between legal acts on statistics

To tackle these issues, the European Statistical System Networks (ESSnet) on Consistency of concepts and methods of business-related statistics was set up and organised around three projects. The 2010 project on 'Statistical units' provided revised definitions of the statistical units enterprise, enterprise group, kind of activity unit and local kind of activity unit. The target was the improvement of the old enterprise definition and operational rules and a data model to enforce uniform implementation. The kind of activity unit and local kind of activity unit were reformulated in order to make application easier. In the future, they will be applied to very big units.

The second project on 'Target population, frames, reference periods, classifications and their applications' (2011) developed recommendations for harmonisation of business registers. By making them the backbone of business statistics more consistency between the domains may be achieved. In terms of size classes and classification, a breakdown is proposed as well as concepts for consistent reference periods. The proposals are targeted at achieving output consistency and developing integrated systems for statistical production.

The 2012 project on 'Characteristics and their definitions' issued recommendations for a system of variables with

consistent and standardised terminology and uniform definitions for all statistical domains, including inclusions and exclusions and explicit references to related variables, as well as methodological guidelines.

Deliverables on CROS portal:

[Project on Statistical Units \(01/01/2011 - 31/12/2012\)](#)

[Project on target population, frames, reference periods, classifications and their applications \(01/01/2012 - 31/12/2013\)](#)

[Project on characteristics and their definitions \(31/08/2012 - 31/12/2013\)](#)

Further Links:

[Final report of the project on statistical units part 1](#)

[Final report of the project on statistical units part 2](#)

[Final report of the project on target population, frames, reference periods, classifications and their applications](#)

[Final report of the project on project on characteristics and their definitions](#)

Consistency between BoP and international transactions statistics

The project was split into two subprojects. The project "Improvement of consistency between BoP and trade statistics" provided funds for improving CIF/FOB methodology and also the data related to goods for processing in the Member States. The project provided funds for exploring the possible ways to close the gap between the two statistical domains.

Developing statistics on enterprise groups

Action 2.2: To establish a community register of multinational enterprise groups

EuroGroups Register (EGR)

The aim of the [EuroGroups Register \(EGR\)](#) is to provide consistent and coordinated survey frames for producing quality statistics measuring globalisation; mainly for [Foreign affiliates statistics \(FATS\)](#) and [Foreign direct investment \(FDI\)](#) .

The methodological development was done with the support of an ESSnet. In 2009 the methodology and the EGR system version 1.0 were set up, as well as the organisational network for the data exchange between Eurostat and ESS members. The yearly frame population produced by the EGR was extended from the largest 5000 multinational enterprise groups (MNEs) with an interest in the EU in 2009 and 2010 to 10 000 MNEs in 2011. In 2012, the EGR started to be upgraded toward version 2.0, with the aim to improve efficiency, [timeliness](#) and consistency with respect to the EGR 1.0. The methodology of EGR 2.0 aims at full coverage for FATS and FDI and at associating national central banks. EGR 2.0 requires remote access for users and producers in the ESS; therefore it has to operate in a secure environment. Due to delays in the Secured Infrastructure for Confidential Data Access (SICON) project, EGR 2.0 was not yet fully operational in 2013 even though the methodological development was completed.

At national level, the implementation of the EGR and its integration with national statistical business registers was co-financed by individual grant agreements.

Deliverables on CROS portal:

[Project period 1 \(2008 - 2009\)](#)

[Project period 2 \(2009 - 2010\)](#)

[Project period 3 \(2010 - 2012\)](#)

[Project period 4 \(2012 - 2014\)](#)

Profiling

The ESSnet on [profiling](#) of large and complex multinational enterprise groups developed methodology and guidelines for profiling multinational and complex enterprise groups. They tested the methodology proposed and supported the implementation of operating methods for the profiling model in the ESS (in particular in ESS members which did not participate in the ESSnet) via e.g. training and coaching sessions. Eurostat is developing an Interactive Profiling Tool (IPT) to facilitate the easy exchange of information between ESS members while simultaneously respecting confidentiality rules. The ESSnet Profiling assisted Eurostat in defining and testing the tool. The ESSnet Profiling worked closely together with the ESSnet Consistency in the development of the revised definition of the enterprise and operational rules.

Deliverables on CROS portal:

[Final report/Executive summary project period 1](#)
[Report on work package A: feasibility study](#)
[Work package B \(partial\): statistical units](#)

Further Links:

[Methodology of profiling \(WPB\) preliminary report](#)

Setting EU sampling schemes

Action 2.3: Conducting community surveys to minimise burden on enterprises

EU sampling schemes aim at providing reliable EU aggregates in order to reduce the burden for Member States for those statistical data for which an EU aggregate satisfies the users' needs. Some methodologies for EU sampling schemes were developed for selected business statistics domains such as space-related activities including e.g. space transport, [Structural business statistics](#) for enterprises with 250-499 employees, outward [FATS](#) , [ICT](#) investment and expenditure and culture statistics.

A pilot data collection aiming at testing and evaluating the methodology had to be cancelled due to a low response rate to the call for proposals.

See also

- [MEETS programme - results](#)

Dedicated section

- [Structural business statistics](#)

Publications

- [External study on detail evaluation of the legal acts in the areas of statistics which were identified by member states as areas to revision](#)

Legislation

- [Communication COM\(2009\) 404](#) on the production method of EU statistics: a vision for the next decade
- [Decision 1297/2008/EC](#) of 16 December 2008 on a Programme for the Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics (MEETS)

- [MEETS project overview, key results and follow-up](#) (downloadable Word document)
- [Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics \(MEETS\)](#)
- [Report COM\(2010\) 813](#) on the implementation of Decision 1297/2008/EC of 16 December 2008 on a Programme for the Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics (MEETS)

External links

- [Cros portal](#)
- [MEETS programme - framework for business-related statistics EuroGroups Register website]