

An **observation unit**, sometimes also called **statistical unit**, is the entity on which information is received and statistics are compiled in the process of collecting statistical data.

An **observation** is the value, at a particular period, of a particular variable, such as the individual price of an item at a given outlet.

Observation units vary according to the specific survey or data collection:

- for statistical data collected on persons the observation unit is usually one individual or a [household](#) ;
- in economic or social surveys collecting data on [enterprises](#), the observation unit can be:
  - an [enterprise](#) : a legally recognised organisational unit carrying out one or more activities at one or more locations; enterprises are classified into sectors (by [NACE](#)) according to their main activity;
  - a [local unit](#) : an enterprise or part of an enterprise (factory, warehouse, office) situated in one geographically identified place; local units are classified into sectors (by NACE) according to their main activity;
  - a [kind-of-activity unit](#) : abbreviated as **KAU** : an enterprise or part of an enterprise which in its entirety can be classified within one activity sector (by NACE);
  - a [Local kind-of-activity unit](#) : a combination of the previous two: an enterprise or part of an enterprise situated in one geographically identified place which in its entirety can be classified within one activity sector (by NACE);

One enterprise can have a number of local units and/or kind-of-activity units. One local unit can comprise several local kind-of-activity units. It is possible that the main activity of a local unit is not the same as the one of the enterprise to which it belongs.

## Related concepts

- [Statistical units](#)

## Source

- [Regulation \(EEC\) No 696/1993](#) of 15 March 1993 on the statistical units for the observation and analysis of the production system in the Community
- [Notice of intention](#) of the Business Statistics Directors Groups and the Directors of Macroeconomic Statistics on the consistent implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 696/93 on statistical units