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**STATISTICAL BUSINESS REGISTERS BASED ON
ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS**

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is firstly to highlight the role of the business register in the organization of a flexible and efficient system of business statistics, capable of producing a variety of quality information more quickly and cheaply in a climate of continuous and rapid economic change. Secondly, it stresses the importance of coordination with administrative records in the construction and maintenance of the statistical business register, identifying the essential elements in this partnership. As a backdrop, reference is made to Brazil's recent experience in overhauling its economic surveys programme, where the central business register has been the cornerstone of the new organization of those surveys, development of which has relied heavily on coordination with administrative records.

Keywords: Business register, administrative records, economic information system.

I. INTRODUCTION

A systematically updated statistical business register is a basic tool in constructing an integrated economic information system, serving multiple purposes within its general function in support of survey production and analysis. These include identification of the links between information units in each firm; sample design; studies on enterprise demographics; and identification of the country's installed productive base in terms of location, size, type of activity, etc.

The development of projects to build integrated economic survey systems linked to business registers necessarily entails using administrative records. The task of designing, implementing and maintaining a statistical business register is complex and takes time to mature; but the process will be facilitated by the ability of the national statistical institute to collaborate with other organizations that produce administrative records.

The use of administrative records in statistics production has been a key topic in symposia and conferences held by national statistical institutes in recent years. The reason for this is that national statistics bodies have substantially increased their use of administrative records, and these records are even being used to complement survey data in some cases. One of the most important applications of administrative records for statistical purposes is in the creation, maintenance and updating of the statistical business register, which is a key element in the organization of economic survey systems focusing on enterprises.

The reasons for using administrative records for statistical purposes include the low cost of obtaining data and a reduction in the response burden imposed on informants. An additional motive would be the fact that administrative records contain information on smaller-sized units and allow for smaller spatial breakdowns, whereas such details are prohibitive for statistics institutes that operate under tight budget constraints, or in terms of cost-benefit analysis. In addition, the technological progress of recent years that has been facilitating and lowering the cost of working with large files, is also encouraging greater use of administrative records in statistics production.

II. OBJECTIVES AND USES OF THE STATISTICAL BUSINESS REGISTER

The statistical business register identifies the universe of productive units active in the country, providing the information needed to support the production and analysis of business surveys. Where information systems are constructed from enterprise registers, as in Brazil, they gain added importance by supporting survey sampling and stratification processes—in other words by defining their reference universe.

For this purpose, the register needs to contain data relating to enterprise identification (name and address), type of activity, variables indicating size, and other elements that make it possible to track a firm's life history. Such an instrument plays a key role in the organization of surveys to produce the country's economic statistics, while also serving other purposes such as studies on business demographics, and statistics on the nation's installed productive base, with breakdowns by size, economic activity and geographic characteristics.

The business world consists of a large number of productive units —groups, firms and their offshoots in local units/establishments, productive arrangements, enterprise partnerships, etc. A feature of the business sector anywhere in the world is that its constituent elements do not all have the same degree of importance in the overall economic life of the country. Although large firms are far fewer than smaller ones, they account for a major part of the country's economic activity. This characteristic needs to be considered in the organization of economic surveys that use enterprises as an information source. As the aim of such surveys is to obtain data on economic activity —structural characteristics, how these change over time, economic performance, etc.— the main interest focuses on the segments that contribute most in defining such patterns. Thus, economic surveys use sample designs that treat firms differently depending on their size —the larger firms are usually included in the surveys' certainty stratum because of their impact on the corresponding estimates.

Within this reality, statistical surveys such as economic census programmes covering the entire enterprise universe are becoming less important, since these are expensive and complex operations that take a long time. Given their function of providing information on the structural characteristics of the country's productive apparatus, censuses can be replaced by a system of sample surveys with broadly defined certainty strata, while smaller firms are covered through sampling procedures. This presupposes the existence of a statistical business register that is wide-ranging, up-to-date and of high quality.

Apart from supplying the data needed to select samples or subpopulations for surveys, a statistical business register can prevent survey overlap through effective sample coordination, thereby reducing costs and lightening the information burden imposed on firms.

For this, the statistical register needs to satisfy a number of characteristics. Firstly, the coverage and scope of the register must encompass the universe of formally established productive units. The way enterprises are organized in the real world does not always correspond to the needs of the statistical survey, and some form of profiling may be required to obtain the appropriate unit —particularly if the register uses administrative records as a basic data source.

The use of standardized statistical units in the business register guarantees time-consistency in the surveys, avoids duplications and omissions in data collection and improves the final quality of their results by allowing greater coordination between surveys.

The existence of a unique identification number, usually a legal code attributed by the tax administration, can greatly enhance capacity for coordination between the various sources, including administrative ones.

The quality of the data contained in a statistical business register is another fundamental requirement, given its key purpose of furnishing lists of enterprise units for surveys. Apart from the accuracy of the data collected, quality in this case should be measured in terms of aspects such as the extent to which the universe of productive units represented is up-to-date, how easy it is to access their data, and whether rules and procedures exist in the updating process.

It is important to ensure the utmost accuracy in the data, particularly those used as stratification variables in the sampling process (variables relating to size and activities classification, for example), together with identification data allowing contact with the firms.

One of the strong points of a statistical register is the quality of the economic activity code of the units comprising it, since this is a key variable in the sample selection process. The quality of this information tends to be fine-tuned over time, as the register receives feedback from the surveys and incorporates the activities classification attributed to the units investigated. The quality of this information is likely to be very much higher than that provided by administrative records, which is normally self-attributed by the informant unit and lacks the more criterion-based analysis used in statistical surveying.

Implementation, by the statistics system and bodies that produce administrative registers and records, of a nationally standardized economic activities classification focusing on productive units, is a goal that should be pursued by the statistical institute within the objective of achieving integrated use of data generated by statistical and administrative sources. This would lead to greater capacity for coordination between data sources, and better quality in the information system as a whole, since the processes that culminate in attributing the economic activities code are generated or controlled by the statistical body in one way or another.

To ensure it remains current, the register must be updated at least once a year to record enterprise births and deaths and capture changes of address and stratification variables. Timely availability of the up-to-date register for sample selection should also be a permanent aim, to avoid affecting the timetable for conducting surveys—the main clients of register data.

The quality of the business register also depends on the quality of the records and the way large firms are dealt with. This can only be guaranteed via data feedback from statistical surveys that include such firms in their certainty strata. Reflecting the dynamism of the business world is just as important for maintaining the integrity of the business register, as the means for identifying and describing its basic units. This enhances the role of a set of procedures defining admissions, births, changes of status and activity, and eliminations.

Although the main objective of the statistical business register is to provide basic registers from which enterprise units can be selected for surveys, there are other equally important uses that justify their existence. For example, there is growing demand for information on business structure and demographics, which is an area in which various countries are investing and where the statistical register provides basic material.

In addition there is a set of economic data that the register can make available through coordination with other sources or administrative records, thereby helping to reduce the burden on economic-survey respondents.

In all countries there is strong demand from a variety of organizations, and from enterprises themselves, for a central reference register that would provide lists of enterprises using standardized identification data (name, address), together with some indication of size and economic activity. National business registers developed for statistical purposes can play an important role in satisfying those needs. Statistical institutes, however, display conflicting attitudes towards dissemination of data from individual business units. In some countries, enterprise lists classified by main activity are not considered confidential, and the legislation governing the statistical institute makes clear that such lists are intended for circulation. In other countries this type of dissemination is prohibited.

Consideration should also be given to the register's potential as a major databank on the country's economic activity, making it possible to periodically disseminate statistics that can be referenced to the

most disaggregated levels of economic activity and in the greatest regional detail possible, given the universal nature of this instrument.

III. STATISTICAL USES OF ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS

The term “administrative record” encompasses any record resulting from fiscal, taxation or other requirements, created to facilitate the administration or operation of government programmes, or to supervise and oversee compliance with legal obligations by certain segments of society.

Their use for statistical purposes requires careful evaluation of their conceptual base, classification and time reference. From the standpoint of the body responsible for the administrative record, making it available for other uses requires the integrity of the declarant to be preserved.

There are several arguments in favour of using such records, but the data must first be evaluated to verify their suitability for a specific use and the final quality that would result from using data of this type for statistical purposes. Aspects that need careful assessment prior to use include: coverage of the administrative record; the variables investigated along with their respective concepts and definitions; the quality with which data are responded to and processed; and the frequency with which they are made available for statistical purposes.

1. Advantages

The main advantage of using administrative records for statistical purposes relates to cost. Surveys are generally very expensive, especially when they take the form of censuses or personal interviews. Administrative records, in contrast, generally cost nothing, particularly if they originate in the public sector. Even where there is a cost, expenditure and resources used in data collection and processing are bound to be less than if the same data were obtained through a specific survey. Given the size and scope of statistical business registers, it would be difficult to create and maintain them satisfactorily through survey data alone, without support from information obtained from administrative sources.

The use of administrative records also helps to reduce the form-filling burden on respondents. Completing questionnaires for statistical purposes may often involve duplication of effort for the informant firm if the same data have already been reported to other government bodies. A side-benefit is that in some cases the use of administrative records may allow certain statistics to be produced with greater frequency, at no additional cost to the informants.

Administrative records generally guarantee complete (or nearly complete) coverage of the target population, whereas sample surveys normally cover only a relatively small proportion directly. Data obtained from administrative records have the advantages of not introducing sampling or other errors inherent in the survey process, dealing with a smaller number of no-reply errors, and allowing for more specific subpopulations (geographic level, size of firm, economic activity). Coverage is particularly important from the standpoint of statistical business registers, since these have to encompass all economic units active in the country.

In relation specifically to the use of administrative records in statistical business registers, the quality of the latter can be considerably enhanced through access to up-to-date information on aspects such as:

- Opening and closure of enterprise units and the dates of such events;
- Economic activity codes of the enterprise or its local units;
- Registry data on their units of operation;
- Data on size (persons employed or turnover).

2. Problems

Although there are many advantages in using administrative records, this is not problem-free.

One of the main difficulties encountered is that the units used by the administrative record usually do not directly match the definition of the statistical units in question. This makes it necessary to convert administrative units into statistical ones, in a process known as “profiling”.

Variables may also be defined differently between the administrative and statistical systems. Data obtained from administrative sources have usually been collected for a specific purpose, and the corresponding needs and priorities may differ from those of the statistical system.

Similarly, the classification systems used in administrative records may differ from those used by the statistical body; and even if they are the same, they may be applied differently, depending on the main objective of the administrative source. When classification systems are different, it is usually necessary to construct conversion tables to transform the codes used by the administrative classification into those required by the statistical body. Such conversions may be one-to-one, one-to-many, or many-to-many; in the latter cases some type of probabilistic allocation is necessary. This can result in a precise codification at more aggregate levels, but not necessarily at the level of individual units.

Another frequent problem in using administrative records relates to the temporal availability of data, since these may not be available on a timely basis to meet the needs of the statistical body, or they may relate to a period that does not match the statistical purpose. There will always be a lag between the occurrence of an event in the real world and its recording in the administrative source, followed by a further delay until it is incorporated into the statistics body. Lags relating to enterprise births and deaths are one of the major sources of coverage error in statistical registers.

Administrative records in the public sector are generally created for taxation or control purposes and are subject to political changes. When the latter occur, records may be affected in terms of coverage, definitions, etc, or they may even be discontinued. Such changes may occur abruptly, without prior warning, which makes total reliance on a given source somewhat risky. This risk can be mitigated through agreements or contracts, or by maintaining permanent contact with senior representatives of the administrative register, in order to gain advance knowledge of upcoming changes and deploy alternative plans to deal with such problems.

When a variety of administrative sources are used, the statistical body faces a problem of data verification. This process will be facilitated if there is some common identification number in the records; if not, verification will have to use other variables, such as name, address and activity code. In that case,

there is likely be a certain proportion of verification errors that will require visual investigation for confirmation.

Another problem that arises when using multiple sources is data consistency. Data from one source may contradict those of another, as a result of different definitions, classifications or even error in one of the sources. To resolve conflicts of this type, rules of priority need to be established to decide which source is most reliable for each variable. Once sources have been priority-ranked for each variable, it will be possible to ensure that a figure from a high priority source will not be replaced by another of lower priority.

If more than one source is possible, how does one identify the highest quality alternative? There is no straightforward answer to this question, but a combination of steps can be taken to reach a decision. Sources should be compared in terms of variable coverage and precision, preferably through some kind of quality survey, to determine the correct values of the variable in question.

A factor that should be taken into consideration, which could be decisive for preferring one administrative record over another, is the ability of the statistical institute to influence preparation of the administrative record, by making suggestions or participating in the definition of concepts, variables, classifications and so forth, in order to enhance the final quality of the data collected.

IV. USES OF ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS IN STATISTICAL REGISTERS

One of the most frequent statistical uses of administrative records is in the creation and maintenance of business registers to serve as the basis for selecting samples or subpopulations of enterprise units for economic surveys. According to a questionnaire addressed to participants at the fifteenth International Roundtable on Business Survey Frames in 2001, 17 out of 19 countries questioned stated that they use some type of administrative record to update or control the quality of their business register, in most cases based on tax administration files.

The task of constructing a business register for statistical purposes is very complex, and international experience shows that implementing and perfecting this instrument takes a long time.

The major challenge in managing the statistical business register is keeping it maintained and up-to-date, given the pace of change in the business world. In the case of smaller firms—which normally account for the vast majority of units registered but have relatively little weight in income generation—enterprise birth and death rates are particularly high. In the large firms—fewer in number but accounting for a significant portion of the productive process—the main difficulty stems from constant mutation through mergers, takeovers, changes of economic activity and business expansion. On the other hand, ever more intensive competition on a global scale helps to fuel this business organization dynamic.

These characteristics of the enterprise universe highlight the importance of keeping the register systematically updated, and the consequent need for a permanent flow of information for this purpose. This role can be played by administrative records, if procedures are put in place to guarantee coordination between them and the statistical business register.

The existence of wide-ranging administrative records allows for greater efficiency and lower costs in the process of constructing and maintaining business registers.

Nonetheless, a number of basic institutional and operational premises pertaining to such records need to be guaranteed before using them, in order to avoid compromising the programme of statistics production based on the business register with information supplied by administrative sources.

Firstly, it is essential to obtain a guarantee of regular access to the administrative record. This requires some type of legislation or institutional agreement, defining issues such as the frequency and deadlines with which the data must be made available, to avoid supply interruptions arising from political or administrative changes.

Secondly, the administrative record must display a minimum level of quality in terms of certain variables that are of fundamental importance for the registers, and it must contain some variable indicating size (turnover, persons employed, etc.) —to allow the samples to be stratified. For this purpose, it is important to know the procedures used to obtain the administrative data and the processes of purging and analysis through which the data passes before being sent on to the statistical institute. Ideally, the administrative and statistical bodies should come together, to enable the latter to contribute to technical discussions and suggest improvements in data collection and processing.

First and foremost, it is important to know the estimated coverage of the administrative record and the error attaching to each of the main variables, since this information can affect sampling procedures and can point to the need for specific treatment to enhance certain information. The type of treatment used by the administrative record to identify births and deaths of economic units is also relevant for sample planning, and for the subsequent study of the register in relation to business demographics.

If a preliminary analysis shows that a given administrative source has sufficient quality to enhance the quality of the business register, a number of procedures usually need to be applied to adjust the administrative data to the requirements of the statistical register, particularly in applying statistical definitions of the basic information units and in the activities classification.

It is unlikely that an administrative source will use the same definition of a survey unit as is required by the statistical business register, especially in the case of complex firms, and some type of transformation may be necessary through procedures known as “profiling”. Normally this problem is most frequent in larger firms where the concept of *legal unit* needs to be adjusted to *statistical unit*. As smaller firms generally operate at a single site, it is seldom necessary to convert the administrative unit into a statistical one in order to fully capture its economic activity.

To ensure proper use of an administrative record in updating the business register, it is essential that the statistical and administrative bodies adopt a standardized activity classification system. Failure to do so may seriously compromise the final quality of the results of surveys based on the register, bearing in mind the low quality of economic activity data. The use of conversion tables to adapt the data to the classification employed by the statistical body is not recommended, because this process results in major quality losses, since it is common to find situations where the transformation is not direct or one-to-one, and probabilistic procedures are required to reduce errors. To avoid this problem, the statistical unit must attempt to persuade the bodies that produce the main administrative records to use a single activity classification table, thereby expanding possibilities for coordination between data sources and reducing errors in the declaration of such information.

Another item that warrants attention relates to the way in which the economic activities classification code is attributed: whether self-attributed by the declarant, or codified by a technical staff member or agent in the inspection/oversight body responsible for the administrative record. Use of one form rather than the other may alter the final quality of this information.

The next step would be to identify the existence of a link between the units in the administrative record and their correspondents in the statistical register. Normally, this link is determined by some administrative identification code (tax code, for example), which should already be stored in the statistical register. If this identification code does not exist, sophisticated record linkage procedures will need to be adopted, exploiting similarities of name, address or other characteristics. Apart from raising costs given the extra resources needed to validate pairs, the quality of the register is bound to be diminished.

V. ACCESS TO ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS

There are two aspects to be considered in guaranteeing access to administrative records. The first relates to the legal framework, and the second concerns practical issues that guide the data transfer process.

Legislation varies between countries, but the preferable approach would be one that guaranteed the statistical body direct and automatic access to the data, through a general statistics law.

Usually, the main administrative records used in updating business registers are those managed by the tax or labour administrations, or social security. Access to these public-sector sources is usually cost-free to the statistical institute, although there may be access difficulties arising from political or legal considerations.

It is advisable to have some form of agreement or formal contract with the organization that produces the administrative record, setting out the rights and responsibilities of both parties, along with confidentiality restrictions, the frequency and format of data transfer and other related issues.

In addition, it is highly advisable to develop a good working relationship with the body that produces the administrative record —something that can be achieved through regular contact, preferably in the form of personal meetings. It is always worth taking time to visit the organizations that furnish the data, in order to improve understanding of their work and systems and gain insight into problems they face. This facilitates exchange of information on data quality, making it possible to identify and solve problems mutually as they arise and before they assume major proportions.

VI. THE USE OF ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS IN THE PRODUCTION OF IBGE ECONOMIC STATISTICS – THE BRAZILIAN EXPERIENCE

Faced with the challenge of operating under tight budgetary constraints and the need to respond flexibly to ever-growing demands for up-to-date information produced at low cost, the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) decided to overhaul its economic survey organization model.

The model adopted prior to the 1985 economic censuses was based on five-yearly economic censuses covering the universe of economic units for a given set of activities. The corresponding outputs provided information on the activities covered, updating and referencing subsequent annual and monthly surveys, together with the system of national accounts. The economic surveys of 1985 also generated a cadastral database, which was intended to form the nucleus of a dynamic and hierarchical register of economic units. This was made possible by including enterprises' legal tax administration ID numbers in the questionnaires, thereby making it possible to link firms with their operating units and, at the same time, coordinate with existing administrative records.

The register generated on the basis of the 1985 economic census was used to extract samples for continuous inter-census surveys complemented by administrative records, using decentralized and non-systemized procedures.

In 1994, IBGE began to implement a new model for producing economic statistics, discontinuing the economic censuses and using the central business register as the system's key organizing element, from which the samples for reformulated annual surveys are drawn. This new model requires closer integration with the bodies responsible for the main administrative records, to enable them to be used systematically to keep register units up-to-date.

A major step towards integration between the statistical institute and the producers of administrative records was taken when several federal bodies adopted the National Economic Activities Classification (CNAE) starting in 1995. The CNAE classification is the result of collaboration, under IBGE coordination, between various public and private entities that produce and use economic statistics, and with administrative record-producing bodies at the national level. The aim is to promote a wide-ranging review of classifications adopted previously, as part of a project to construct a standardized classification compatible with the International Standard Industrial Classification-Rev 3.

To update the Central Business Register with a new activities classification, a wide-ranging sample survey was carried out, in which industrial firms with 30 or more workers, and commercial and service enterprises with 20 or more employees comprised the certainty stratum. Enterprises below those thresholds were covered on a sample basis. Given an estimated universe of about 2 million enterprises, the total survey investigated approximately 400,000 firms and enabled IBGE to publish statistics on the Brazilian enterprise productive structure from the Central Business Register for the first-time.

Thus, in 1996, the new organization model was implemented for the annual economic surveys of industry, commerce, construction and services (the latter after 1998). The respective samples were drawn from the register, partly updated by the sample survey and complemented by data from the administrative record of widest available coverage, namely the Annual Social Information Report (RAIS), which has now adopted the new CNAE activities classification. As from 1996, the register-survey integration

process was established on a definitive basis, whereby the register supplies the bases for enterprise selection while the surveys feed the information they obtain back into the register.

Another change in the new model is the fact that the surveys have adopted the **local unit** as the basic statistical unit, i.e. each address at which the firm operates, which is the same basic unit as used by the administrative records.

Apart from adopting a single activities classification table for all bodies producing administrative records, the partnership with the Ministry of Labour has been fundamental for the success of the new programme. This is the agency that produces the main administrative records on employment (RAIS), covering an estimated 95% of the formal universe of enterprises and persons employed.

There is no legislation to ensure the RAIS report is supplied to IBGE, although a formal agreement exists with the Ministry of Labour setting out the rights and responsibilities of both parties, together with confidentiality restrictions, the frequency and format of data transfer and other related issues. Good relations between the two bodies pave the way for IBGE to receive the RAIS on a periodical basis; while IGBE in turn makes suggestions in the process and reports problems identified in the data. It also participates in the technical group that defines RAIS procedures, represented by the manager of its Central Business Register.

Although this is not the ideal administrative record for the Central Business Register, since the economic variable measuring size is persons employed (rather than turnover, sales value or equivalent), RAIS has proven to be the most secure and constant data source. There has never been any interruption in receiving information, despite the fact that it is not always made available on the most appropriate dates for updating the register for the purpose of selecting samples for annual surveys.

At the present time, IBGE only has access to data on enterprise income tax in aggregate form; despite continuous efforts by the statistics institute to gain access to the information on an individual basis, this is currently prevented on legal grounds. Gaining such access would be a major step towards rationalizing the information system, mainly in the small-enterprise segment, where the use of income-tax data could obviate need for direct surveying of such firms by the statistical institute.

Meanwhile, it is through RAIS that the Central Business Register is updated every year, incorporating new firms and providing information on enterprise births and deaths, and changes of address, together with data on employment and remuneration, which facilitate sample selection for economic surveys.

Apart from good relations with the body that produces RAIS, the existence of a single identification code for enterprises and their local units, and the adoption of the same basic unit of investigation by the administrative and statistical bodies, have been decisive factors for the success of the new economic statistics production model, based on a central business register permanently updated from administrative records.

In addition to furnishing lists of business units for economic surveys, since 1996 the Central Business Register has also been a producer of statistics itself, using information from its databank, updated yearly from annual surveys and administrative records. The publication of Central Business Register statistics forms part of the annual statistical diffusion programme of IBGE, containing information on the universe of currently active business units, with breakdowns by economic activity,

size, geographic area, and other variables. Studies on enterprise demographics have also been disseminated, publishing enterprise birth and death rates according to size measured by persons employed.

Apart from catering mainly to surveys in the economic area —manufacturing industry, commerce and services— the register has also been used as a reference to generate lists of units for IBGE surveys in other areas, such as social surveys conducted in health establishments; basic sanitation surveys which investigate firms that provide water and sewerage treatment services; and association membership surveys —investigating the country’s unions, among other organizations. More recently, the register has supplied the universe of commercial establishments for the purpose of selecting the sample of local sites from which prices will be collected to construct the National Consumer Price Index. Other statistical institutes at state level also use the Central Business Register as a reference universe for producing regional statistics, thereby ensuring subsequent comparability with those produced by IBGE.

Given the acknowledged quality of its data, particularly in terms of the classification of activities of the units comprising it, the Central Business Register has been in great demand by other institutions seeking to improve the activity code of their registers. A variety of public or private bodies frequently submit the list of enterprises in their registers to IBGE, requesting attribution of the CNAE codes in accordance with data contained in the Central Business Register.

In addition to the commitment to use the CNAE agreed among all public administration bodies that produce administrative records, IBGE coordinates activities involved in maintaining this classification, which are undertaken and discussed periodically with those bodies. As coordinator of the national classification system, IBGE runs a classification consultation centre that is open to the public via e-mail or telephone, in addition to providing a number of support tools for correct attribution of the activity code, and supplying training in technical teams responsible for codifying activities in supervisory and taxation bodies.

In 2002, IBGE took a further step towards integration of the national information system, by organizing the first National Meeting of Corporate Register Producers —bringing together for the first time the people directly responsible for maintaining the key national statistical and administrative registers. The aim of the meeting was to gain mutual knowledge of the contents and procedures of the registers presented, and to expand the process of integrating sources by creating working groups to discuss specific issues in operating business registers. The intention is for this event to be held annually, giving continuity to the process of coordination between statistical and administrative information sources, initiated and led by the statistics institute.

VII. CONCLUSION

Statistical business registers are key elements in the construction of integrated statistical information systems. They serve multiple purposes, of which the most important involve the provision of samples and subpopulations of statistical units for use in surveys. The task of constructing and maintaining a register is complex, but it can be greatly facilitated if supported by information originating in administrative records.

Internationally, administrative records have been a major complement to surveys in building the statistical information system, particularly in the construction and maintenance of statistical business

registers. Nonetheless it is important to evaluate major aspects of administrative records relating to quality, coverage, definition of concepts, methodologies, classifications and the variables investigated, among other things, before adopting them as a source for keeping the statistical register up-to-date.

The most effective methods for updating the statistical business register combine the use of information from administrative records and data from statistical surveys. Administrative records have the advantage of covering the entire enterprise universe, while surveys offer potentially more complete information albeit for a more restricted population.

Nonetheless, one needs to be alert to the fact that the more the statistical body makes use of administrative records, the more it will be reliant on administrative bodies, since an interruption of the flow and systematic supply of data for statistical programmes must not occur.

In this regard, apart from specific legislation allowing administrative records to be used for statistical purposes, it is essential to establish a cooperation policy with the bodies that supply such records, since the ability to influence the design or reformulation of administrative systems stems from mutual understanding of the needs of each party involved.

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