

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Second Meeting of the 2013/2014 Bureau
Geneva (Switzerland), 21-22 October 2013

For discussion and
recommendations

Item 2(b) of the Provisional
Agenda

**COMMENTS ON THE IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP
STATISTICS**

Prepared by the Secretariat

The note provides the comments from UNECE as input to the in-depth review on entrepreneurship statistics.

I. USE OF STATISTICAL BUSINESS REGISTERS

1. The in-depth review on entrepreneurship statistics refers to statistical business registers (SBR) several times. Two of the recommendations presented in the paper relate to SBR as follows:

(a) Better use and improvements in business registers and in labour force surveys can provide more solid information for international benchmarking of entrepreneurship.

(b) The development of longitudinal datasets (based on 'harmonised' registers) should be encouraged, as well as further efforts to link these datasets to other datasets (surveys). The result of the linkage between trade and business registers, the TEC database provides information on exporting activities of enterprises. More information is needed, both for directly exporting firms and those that sell intermediates to larger exporting firms. Linked datasets would provide an important support to the analysis of globalisation.

2. The currently active Task Force on SBR could be asked to review the feasibility to address these tasks from the point of view of entrepreneurship in their work. Even if the Task Force will address some of the issues raised under recommendations (a) and (b), the specific viewpoint of measuring entrepreneurship may be missing.

3. It may be better to wait before establishing a new Task Force, or if such a Task Force is created it will need to be closely coordinated with the Task Force on SBR. It may be easier to review the issue after the guidelines on statistical business registers are at the disposal of the new Task Force.

4. There may also be potential overlap with the OECD/Eurostat Entrepreneurship Indicators Programme which should be taken into account.

II. IMPACT ON THE QUALITY OF STATISTICAL BUSINESS REGISTERS

5. Collection of entrepreneurship data in less developed statistical systems can have a critical impact on the quality of statistical business registers. This aspect has not been considered in the in-depth review paper. Having better data on entrepreneurship would have a strong impact on the quality of all economic and business statistics right through to National Accounts.

6. This was demonstrated clearly by the Demography of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (DOSME) project for the countries of East Europe and Central Asia already in the 1990's. This project allowed for some of the participating countries within five years to catch up with some of their western European counterparts in the quality of data on SMEs. The East European, Caucasus and Central Asian countries are now at a point where they could greatly benefit from a similar project. Visible results could be achieved in a capacity building project with sufficient funding.

III. PROPOSAL

7. The Bureau is invited to consider the recommendations presented in the in-depth review on entrepreneurship statistics in view of the above comments.

8. One option could be to ask the existing task force on SBR to assess the feasibility to address the recommendations (a) and (b) as part of their work; or if a new Task Force would be established, the secretariat would support including the preparation of a capacity building project to the countries of East Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia in its Terms of Reference.

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