

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Meeting of the 2015/2016 Bureau
Luxembourg, 9-10 February 2016

Approved

Item 3 (c) of the Provisional
Agenda

**ENTREPRENEURSHIP: PROPOSAL FOR FURTHER WORK TAKING INTO
ACCOUNT THE GUIDELINES ON STATISTICAL BUSINESS REGISTERS**

Note prepared by the OECD and the UNECE Secretariat

*The note includes a proposal for possible future work related to entrepreneurship statistics to be carried out under the auspices of CES taking into account the Guidelines on Statistical Business Registers. **The Bureau reviewed and approved the proposal.***

I. BACKGROUND

1. In October 2014 the Bureau discussed possible follow-up work to the in-depth review on entrepreneurship, and asked that the issues relating to entrepreneurship statistics be taken into account in the *Guidelines on Statistical Business Registers*. The Bureau decided to discuss possible further work on other aspects of entrepreneurship statistics after the finalisation of the Guidelines. In June 2015, the CES plenary session endorsed the *Guidelines on Statistical Business Registers*.

II. ENTREPRENEURSHIP STATISTICS AND BUSINESS REGISTERS

2. As recommended by the Bureau, the *Guidelines on Statistical Business Registers* address the role of statistical business registers (SBRs) in supporting the development of statistical information for entrepreneurship analysis and policy. The Guidelines highlight the use of SBRs for the direct production of statistics, in particular regarding business demographics, and stress the importance and benefits of this approach, especially compared to other sources, throughout the document. To that purpose, the Guidelines present the successful experience of the Eurostat-OECD Entrepreneurship Indicators Programme which has implemented and advocated this approach from the outset.

3. The Guidelines also stress the importance of a comprehensive coverage of units, including small businesses, as well as the importance of maintaining live registers and frozen frames for the production of entrepreneurship statistics and the analysis of small and medium size enterprises (Chapter 11 “Key considerations in establishing an SBR”).

4. Finally, Chapter 12 (Topics for further work and research) includes suggestions for the development of new statistics that build on the general principle of capitalising on the SBR. These include, notably, new indicators relating to ‘ownership’ (e.g. foreign owned firms, domestically owned firms with affiliates abroad, and other domestic owned firms) and new indicators that exploit linkages between trade and business registers, providing new insights into economic globalisation. The Guidelines build on this general principle of ‘linking’ by advocating links with other sources (administrative data, surveys, other statistical registers) and/or type of data (social and/or population), that strengthen the SBR’s position at the heart of the statistical information system, and that could broaden the range of entrepreneurship indicators to include for example, international trade by young enterprises, or gender of the business owner. Importantly, these recommendations also recognise the relevant spillovers that could emerge from such improvements in the selection and stratification of firms in standard business surveys, where discussions in a number of fora are increasingly returning to the subject of whether today’s registers necessarily provide the most optimal variables for survey selection; especially given the increasing levels of firm heterogeneity that vary by, for example, degree of integration into global value chains.

5. Beyond the references in the Guidelines, the preparatory work itself has helped promote the compilation of entrepreneurship statistics from the SBR, via discussions at the Wiesbaden Group and the Joint UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Expert Group on Business Registers.

III. PROPOSAL FOR FURTHER WORK

6. Taking into account the Guidelines, the proposal for further work aims to advance the development of new statistics on entrepreneurship that can be drawn directly from the SBR (for example by creating new aggregation of firms, and indicators, based on additional characteristics that may be available in the SBR, such as ‘ownership’) or through linking exercises, in particular through links with trade registers (where many countries have already made significant progress as part of the Trade by Enterprise Characteristics exercise) and other datasets, notably in the realm of labour and population data.

7. In light of the complexity of the work described above **a small group composed of 3-4 countries, OECD, Eurostat and UNECE were asked to reflect on further work in the area of entrepreneurship statistics, identify possible output of such work and a time frame, and report back to the Bureau in the first half of 2016 with a concrete proposal for further work.**

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