Abstract

A business profiling program has existed for over 20 years at Statistics Canada. This paper will briefly describe the history of the program, where we are today, the challenges faced and the benefits that have been realized through the continued investment.

The Statistics Canada business profiling program has evolved over the years. Although the Business Register Division is responsible for the maintenance and quality of the Register, the updating of the enterprise structures has never been more dynamic. Subject-matter experts from the agency’s many economic statistics programs update the Register directly. In addition, the Register is being updated regularly by the use of administrative data. Both of these aspects are extremely important to the program and they bring a huge benefit in the relevance, timeliness and accuracy of the data. However, at the same time they present challenges that the program has had to work through and will have to continue to manage. The continued and increasing collaboration with our internal and external partners has a large impact on the quality and usage of the data.

The Business Register has developed an extensive training program that is adaptable to the various levels of access needed by the varying users. Along with specific training programs, we have continuous learning programs, workshops, discussion groups. The large investment in the training program will be discussed in further detail along with the various levels of users and the skill sets required to maintain the Register, most importantly the large and complex enterprise profilers.

The paper will also briefly describe the quality assurance methods used to ensure the consistency and coherence of the data on a monthly basis. The challenges faced in managing the expectations of all economic survey areas as well as meeting their specific program requirements.

The business profiling program requires a significant corporate investment but brings an enormous benefit to Canada’s official economic statistics. The challenges in managing the priorities of
Statistics Canada versus the available resources will be discussed as well as, how the agency’s commitment to the profiling program has evolved over the 20 years.