A proposal for the profiling of statistical units in Colombia’s Statistical Business Register

Abstract
In Colombia, the processes of maintenance of the business register consider traditional elements based on the update of records from administrative sources. These records include: social security records, chambers of commerce records and records from supervision and control governmental entities, among others. However, business profiling methods for strengthening the register and as a tool for reducing response burden in economic surveys have not been explored yet.

In 2013, the need for incorporating this type of procedures arose; therefore, the design of a methodological proposal for profiling was suggested. The proposal was developed at the beginning of the year 2014. As a result of this initiative, a methodological document and a pilot test for implementation were developed. The latter is currently in its execution phase.

This article explains the main guidelines established for the implementation of business profiling procedures in Colombia. The importance of their implementation is highlighted considering the growing emergence of enterprise groups and the need of the business register to have consistent information in its more complex statistical units. The main difficulties in the definition of units and their selection criteria are specified considering the limitations of the business register currently being used.
Additionally, a brief description is made on the proposed profiling implementation procedure which is carried out through a scheme which consists of three phases. The procedure is put into practice in the first two phases by means of a pilot exercise conducted on one of the most important enterprise groups in the country. Collected information that has been obtained from sources available on the web and financial statements reported by companies to government administrative sources is stored in a spreadsheet file.

The results obtained and the problems encountered along the way will allow DANE through the Geostatistics Division-DIG (for its acronym in Spanish) to make adjustments to the methodology and propose a work plan for the profiling of statistical units in the Statistical Business Register – DEST (for its acronym in Spanish).