Abstract

Quality of a statistical business register is of high importance to various users and interest groups. As these often have different and sometimes conflicting interests, also their definitions of quality might not always be fully consistent with each other. For one user, the quality might equal how the content of the business register reflects reality while the other one might put more weight on the content being consistent with other statistics – for example SBS – when assessing the quality of the business register data.

In this paper, methods and practices used to measure the different aspects of quality of Finnish business register and the challenges of quality measurement encountered in practice are presented. In addition, the paper discusses the possibilities for improving both the quality and its measurement on our recently implemented integrated business statistics production model.

Already from 2002 onward an annual quality control survey has been part of our regular processes. The survey is targeted at the units that are not covered by our direct data collection. Quality control survey has been found a good tool to measure the accuracy and timeliness of our location address and activity code data. Other methods we have implemented include a tool used to check the relevance and completeness of our register content. The tool compares our business register data with different administrative data sources and is especially useful to check the information concerning on one hand new units and on the other hand units that have ceased their activities. In addition to these reporting tools, more informal methods – like direct feedback both from other in-house statistics and from our outside-NSI users – play an important role in our quality measurement.

More recently, we have implemented an integrated business statistics production system providing us more intensive co-operation and more consistent data content with our most important in-house users. In this process, our business statistics production practices were renewed as well, enabling our statisticians to gain in more versatile expertise over different business statistics. Thus, the comparison between the business register and other business statistics data is not only more reasonable and more convenient but also a more natural part of the day-to-day work in practice.