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Theme 2

**USE OF ADMINISTRATIVE SOURCES FOR STATISTICS AND INTERNATIONAL
COMPARABILITY**

Supporting paper submitted by the State Committee of the Russian Federation on Statistics
(Goskomstat of the Russian Federation)

1. Government statistical information on the economic, demographic and social situation in the Russian Federation are produced on the basis of data obtained from juridical and physical individuals by means of questionnaires or from records that are used only for statistical purposes, and on the basis of the administrative data collected and processed by the relevant state administration within the framework of their functions.
2. Goskomstat of Russia annually prepares and agrees with the Government of the Russian Federation the Federal programme of statistical activities for purposes of better co-ordination between industries, for the regulation of functions in the sphere of government statistics based on the use of statistical data obtained from the official organisations, for avoiding duplication in activities, and for reducing budget expenditures and the response burden on respondents. This programme represents the plan of activities in the area of government statistics, that is carried out by federal state authorities according to the sphere of their competence.
3. Joint work of organisations and their regional bodies within the implementation of the Federal Programme of statistical activities is based on principles of information exchange and is supported by normative documents, in particular, by agreements on the exchange of information, relations between the Goskomstat of Russia and the Federal state authorities and their regional organisations (structures).

4. Goskomstat of Russia co-operates in the most efficient way with the State Customs Committee of the Russian Federation (SCK of Russia), the Ministry of Labour and Social Development of the Russian Federation (Mintrud of Russia) and the Ministry of Science and Technology of the Russian Federation (Minnauka of Russia). We have also positive experiences in co-operating with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food of the Russian Federation (Minselchozprod of Russia), the Ministry of Communications of the Russian Federation (MPS of Russia), the Ministry of Transport of the Russian Federation (Mintrans of Russia), the Ministry of Internal (*Inferior*) Affairs of Russia (MVD of Russia) and with some other organisations.

5. Such co-operation and co-ordination in methodological approaches to creating statistical data with respect to the international statistical standards allows us to broaden (enlarge) the sphere of the use of administrating data and in this way decreased the reporting burden on respondents.

6. Recently, Goskomstat of Russia started to obtain data on the availability of transport vehicles and on road safety from the administrative sources of Mintrans of Russia and MVD of Russia. We no longer collect these data from hundreds of thousands of vehicle owners and operators. As for the data on the availability and improvement of housing, the transition from statistical to administrative sources of data collection was made within the similar scale.

7. The most widely used administrative data in official Russian statistics are used for compiling the system of national accounts, for population statistics, for labour, finance, foreign trade and living standards statistics, and in some other domains.

8. At the same time, during the process of information exchange between Goskomstat of Russia and other departments, a host of complicated problems appear, and they require the development of unified methodological approaches, of standards of data transfer and improvement in the legislation basis.

9. The information basis in the Russian Federation for compiling data for the system of national accounts includes, besides statistical data, a wide range of indicators from banks, customs, taxation and other organisations.

10. However, the list of presented indicators and the calculation methodology do not always correspond to the requirements of the SNA.

11. The co-relations between statistics of government finance, accounting, banking statistics, statistics of foreign trade and the corresponding to the system of national accounts international standards, is of great importance at this stage for the improving of the system of national accounts in view of its transition to a new internationally applied version.

12. At the same time, the current methodology and content of budget statistics do not fully correspond to the requirements of SNA, which makes it difficult to use them for the compilation of the accounts and for the calculation of separate indicators.

13. The Ministry of Finance of Russia which works out and approves all the types of accounting reporting, provides methodological comments, and tries to improve them so that they correspond to the international standards.

14. According to the taxation code of the Russian Federation, data on taxation and any other information obtained by taxation services (including accounting reports of enterprises) about a tax-payer is of a confidential character, and this represents the main obstacle in the use of the administrative data from taxation services.

15. The contradictions in the adopted normative documents prevents the statistical organisations together with the taxation bodies from checking all enterprises one by one, and thus makes it impossible to ensure completeness and reliability of information obtained on the basis of the accounts data.
16. The primary information for current population statistics is based on the system of registration of individual events such as births, deaths, marriages and divorces by the ZAGZ bodies, and data on arrivals and departures is based on passport-visa services.
17. The current vital accounting consists of collecting data on births, deaths, marriages and divorces in the process when these events take place. Since each of these demographic events has a juridical character, they are recorded at the moment of their state registration. The information on vital population changes is then obtained from further processing of statistical data contained in the second copies of the certificates on births, deaths, marriages and divorces, which are issued by ZAGS bodies.
18. However, some difficulties appeared with the entering into force of the Federal Law "On Acts of Civil Status" (N 143-§3 of 15 November 1997). Some basic information on current population statistics has been withdrawn from the civil status acts. Moreover, the Law does not include the submitting of the second copies to statistical organisations since this information is of a confidential character. The changes in the way of generalised processing of registration records caused an increase in expenses in statistical organisations and in ZAGS bodies as well.
19. The completeness of births, deaths, marriages and divorces registration by ZAGS bodies and the quality of completing of registration certificates have a direct influence on the reliability of the statistics. Harmonisation of accounting became possible with the changes and annexes to the Federal Law "On Acts of Civil Status" and by the restoring of missing information in the records.
20. The experience of countries with developed government statistics shows that the national statistical organisations receive a considerable amount of statistical information in an automated manner from other statistical organisations (on taxation, on employment, on pensions and social security, and on license registrations), and in the form of completed questionnaires from enterprises and individuals. This increases the reliability of official statistical information and reduces the budget expenditure and the expenses of enterprises on statistical reporting.
21. Goskomstat of Russia cannot yet manage to introduce such an approach because of information and technical discrepancies in the information sources from various federal, regional and local authorities.
22. The creation of unified statistical information space of federal bodies of government organisations and co-ordination of their statistical activities is a very important problem, that needs to be solved.
23. The all-Russian classifiers of technical, economic and social information are the only means which, according to the federal law on informatics and standardization, could ensure the information comparability of the state information sources. The Resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation of 1 November 1999 No.1212 "On Development of a Unified System of Classification and Coding of Technical and Economical and Social Information", prepared with the initiative and participation of the Goskomstat of Russia, can be considered as the first step for creating comparability of information sources of federal governments on the basis of the obligatory application of all-Russia classifiers by each of their organisations.
24. The second important condition for creating of unified information space of government authorities is the technical compatibility of their information systems.
25. Goskomstat of Russia carries out information operations using the registers of over 20 other federal

authorities on the basis of bilateral agreements. Due to the lack of unified format of electronic data exchange, this co-ordination is technically performed according to the agreements reached with each organisation concerning the format of the exchange. At the same time, because of differences in programming and technological methods, it is totally impossible to secure direct permanent access to their information sources and their simultaneous up-dating.

26. The above situation is the result of the lack of unified standard requirements for programming and the technological means of creating information sources of the federal authorities and of the lack of co-ordination in the work in this area.

27. At present, Goskomstat of Russia is actively working on resolving these problems.

28. Thus, the use of administrative data sources for the production of official statistics in the Russian Federation will require in the initial stage additional expenses for co-ordinating the methodology and technology involved in the exchange of information between the organisations concerned. However, in the future these added expenses could be offset by a reduction in the costs of data collection and data processing, and by improvements in the quality and reliability of the statistics.
