

European statistical business registers

Reference Metadata in Euro SDMX Metadata Structure (ESMS)

Compiling agency: Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union

Eurostat metadata

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For any question on data and metadata, please contact: [Eurostat user support](#)

1. Contact

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1.1. Contact organisation	Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union
1.2. Contact organisation unit	Unit G1: Coordination and infrastructure development
1.5. Contact mail address	2920 Luxembourg LUXEMBOURG

2. Metadata update

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2.1. Metadata last certified	09/06/2023
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2.2. Metadata last posted	09/06/2023
2.3. Metadata last update	09/06/2023

3. Statistical presentation

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3.1. Data description

The statistical business registers (SBR) are basic infrastructure for the collection and compilation of data for European business statistics. The SBR are used as the main source of information for statistical analysis of the business population and its demography, for the definition of the survey population and for establishing the link to administrative data sources.

European statistical business registers shall be the authoritative sources for deriving harmonised frame populations for the production of European business statistics. SBR contribute to the achievement of consistent and comparable European business statistics by creating and using coordinated populations of statistical units.

The national statistical business registers (NSBRs) include information on the active population of:

- all enterprises carrying out economic activities contributing to the gross domestic product (GDP) and their local units;
- the legal units of which those enterprises consist;
- the kind of activity unit for those enterprises which due to their size have a significant influence and whose kind-of-activity units (KAUs) have a significant influence on the aggregated (national) data;
- enterprise groups to which those enterprises belong, including all-resident and multinational enterprise groups operating in the national territory.

Local units of foreign enterprises not constituting separate legal entities (branches), and classified as quasi- corporations in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 549/2013, shall be deemed to be enterprises for the purposes of the national statistical business registers and the EuroGroups Register.

Enterprise groups shall be identified through the links of control between their legal units in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 549/2013.

For the purposes of the European framework for statistical business registers, the following shall be considered to be an economic activity:

- any activity comprising the offer of goods and services on a given market;
- non-market services contributing to the GDP;
- direct and indirect holdings of active legal units.

Holding assets and/or liabilities may also be considered to be an economic activity.

Important mandatory variables recorded for the units in the NSBRs are:

- Identification variables: ID numbers, names, addresses;
- Demographic events: Date of commencement/cessation of the unit;
- Economic variables/stratification parameters: Economic activity (NACE), employment, turnover, legal form, legal activity status;
- Information on control and ownership of units: Parent/subsidiary legal unit, minority shareholder information, country of global decision centre.

The Annex VIII to the EBS Implementing act provides the list of variables that should be included in the NSBRs.

3.2. Classification system

Classification systems/code lists used in the national statistical business registers:

- Statistical classification of economic activities in the European Community (NACE Rev. 2);
- European System of Accounts (ESA 2010);
- Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics (NUTS);
- Country codes (2-digit ISO country codes);
- List of legal form for legal units.

3.3. Coverage - sector

The coverage of the NSBRs is defined in the Regulation (EU) 2019/2152 on European business statistics. The NSBRs comprise all enterprises resident in the national territory that are carrying out economic activities contributing to gross domestic product (GDP).

Households do not fall within the scope of the European framework for statistical business registers insofar as the goods and services they produce are destined to their own consumption, or involve letting out of own property.

The NSBR frame cover all units which, wholly or partially, exercise an **economic activity** and economically inactive legal units, which are part of an enterprise in combination with economically active legal units. The following economic activities are considered:

- any activity comprising the offer of goods and services on a given market;
- non-market services contributing to the GDP;
- direct and indirect holdings of active legal units.

Holding assets and/or liabilities are also considered an economic activity.

3.4. Statistical concepts and definitions

Definitions of concepts and variables used for the NSBRs are described in the Glossary to EBS methodological manual for Statistical Business Registers (2021 edition) and detailed in [European business statistics methodological manual for statistical business registers — 2021 edition - Products Manuals and Guidelines - Eurostat \(europa.eu\)](#).

The definitions of the main concepts used are as follows:

Active unit

Units that had either turnover or employment at any time during the reference period are active. A unit is also deemed to be active when it is in investment phase, but still does not generate turnover.

Master frame

Master frames comprise populations of statistical units, their interrelationships with each other and their relationships with administrative units, and are shared and used by statistical domains to coordinate their survey frames. Master frames are created by reference periods (month, quarter or year) and can have different versions: preliminary, intermediate or final.

Multinational enterprise group

A multinational enterprise group is an enterprise group that has at least two enterprises or legal units located in different countries.

Number of employees - EBS regulation

The number of employees represents the average number of persons who were, at some time during the reference period, employees of the statistical unit.

Number of employees and self-employed persons - EBS regulation

The number of employees and self-employed persons is the sum of the Number of employees and Number of self-employed persons. The number of self-employed persons is the average number of persons who were at some time during the reference period the sole owners or joint owners of the statistical unit in which they work. Family workers and outworkers whose income is a function of the value of the outputs of the statistical unit are also included.

Number of local units

A count of the number of local units as defined in Regulation (EEC) No 696/93 registered to the population concerned in the business register corrected for errors, in particular frame errors. Local units must be included even if they have no paid employees. This statistic should include all units active during at least a part of the reference period.

Net turnover - EBS regulation

For all activities except for NACE 64, 65 and some activities of NACE 66 net turnover consists of all income arising during the reference period in the course of ordinary activities of the statistical unit, and is presented net of all price reductions, discounts and rebates granted by it.

Income is defined as increases in economic benefits during the reference period in the form of inflows or enhancements of assets or decreases of liabilities that result in increases in equity, other than those relating to contributions from equity participants.

The inflows referred to are arising from contracts with customers and are realized through the satisfaction by the statistical unit of performance obligations as foreseen in said contracts. Usually, a performance obligation is represented by the sale (transfer) of goods or the rendering of services, however, the gross inflows can also contain revenues obtained as a yield on the use by others of the statistical unit's assets.

Excluded from net turnover are:

- all taxes, duties or levies linked directly to revenue;
- any amounts collected on behalf of any principal, if the statistical unit is acting as an agent in its relationship with said principal;
- all income not arising in the course of ordinary activities of the statistical unit. Usually, these types of income are classified as 'Other (operating) income', 'Financial income', 'Extra-ordinary income' or under a similar heading, depending on the respective set of generally accepted accounting standards used to prepare the financial statements.

Infra-annual statistics may not be able to take into account aspects such as annual price reductions, subsidies, rebates and discounts.

For the activities of NACE K6411, K6419 and K649 net turnover is defined as the value of output minus subsidies or government grants.

For the activities of NACE K642 and K643 net turnover can be approximated by the total operating costs, if net turnover is not available in the financial statements.

For the activities of NACE K6511, K6512 and K652 net turnover is defined as Gross premiums earned.

For the activities of NACE K653 the net turnover is defined as total pension contributions

For activities of NACE K66 for which net turnover is not available in the financial statements, net turnover is defined as the value of output minus subsidies or government grants. For activities of NACE K66 for which net turnover is available in the financial statements, the standard definition of net turnover applies.

3.5. Statistical unit

The statistical units within the statistical business registers are defined in accordance with Regulation (EEC) No 696/93, as follows:

- Enterprise - the enterprise is the smallest combination of legal units that is an organizational unit producing goods or services, which benefits from a certain degree of autonomy in decision-making, especially for the allocation of its current resources. An enterprise carries out one or more activities at one or more locations. An enterprise may be a sole legal unit.
- Enterprise group - an enterprise group is an association of enterprises bound together by legal and/or financial links. A group of enterprises can have more than one decision-making centre, especially for policy on production, sales and profits. It may centralize certain aspects of financial management and taxation. It constitutes an economic entity, which is empowered to make choices, particularly concerning the units, which it comprises.
- Kind of activity unit (KAU) - the kind of activity unit groups all the parts of an enterprise contributing to the performance of an activity at class level (four digits) of NACE and corresponds to one or more operational subdivisions of the enterprise. The enterprise's information system must be capable of indicating or calculating for each KAU at least the value of production, intermediate consumption, manpower costs, the operating surplus and employment and gross fixed capital formation.
- Local unit - the local unit is an enterprise or part thereof (e. g. a workshop, factory, warehouse, office, mine or depot) situated in a geographically identified place. At or from this place economic activity is carried out for which - save for certain exceptions - one or more persons work (even if only part-time) for one and the same enterprise.

3.6. Statistical population

The target population for the national statistical business registers is defined as follows:

- all enterprises carrying out economic activities contributing to the gross domestic product (GDP), and their local units;
- the legal units of which those enterprises consist;
- for those enterprises which due to their size have a significant influence and whose kind-of-activity units (KAUs) have a significant influence on the aggregated (national) data either:
 - the KAU and size of each KAU of which those enterprises consist; or
 - the NACE code of the secondary activities of those enterprises as laid down in Regulation (EC) No 1893/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council and the size of each of those secondary activities;
- enterprise groups to which those enterprises belong, including all-resident and multinational enterprise groups operating in the national territory.

3.7. Reference area

The reference area for national statistical business register is the territory of the country. Concerning enterprise groups any country outside the national territory may be relevant.

3.8. Coverage - Time

Since the first European regulation on business registers, published in 1993, the EU Member States have harmonised and developed their national business registers for statistical purposes. Time coverage varies from country to country. Typically, annual frames cover the period back to 1998, and sometimes to the year when the original BR regulation was adopted (1993). Some

countries have established their registers earlier.

EBS variables and statistical units have been introduced in the national statistical business registers from the reference year 2021 onwards.

Reference dates of all variables in the final frame should refer to the reference year t, reflecting the final picture of national statistical business registers of the reference year t

3.9. Base period

Not applicable.

4. Unit of measure

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The economic variables on employment are recorded in absolute figures. The net turnover is recorded in 1.000 of Euro/national currency units.

5. Reference Period

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The reference period is the calendar year. An annual copy that reflects the state of the national statistical business registers at the end of the year is taken and kept for at least 30 years for the purpose of analysis.

Reference dates of all variables in the final frame should refer to the reference year t, reflecting the final picture of national statistical business registers of the reference year t.

6. Institutional Mandate

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6.1. Institutional Mandate - legal acts and other agreements

The national statistical business registers are established in accordance with :

- [Regulation \(EU\) 2019/2152](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 November 2019 on European business statistics;
- [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2020/1197](#) of 30 July 2020 laying down technical specifications and arrangements pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2019/2152 of the European Parliament and of the Council on European business statistics.

6.2. Institutional Mandate - data sharing

The [EBS Regulation \(EU\) 2019/2152](#) lays down provisions on the exchange of and access to confidential data for the purpose of the European framework for statistical business registers.

The [Commission implementing regulation \(EU\) 2020/1197](#) lays down technical specifications and arrangements pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2019/2152, including technical specifications for the exchange of confidential data for the purposes of the European framework for statistical business registers.

7. Confidentiality

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7.1. Confidentiality - policy

[Regulation \(EC\) No 223/2009](#) on European statistics (recital 24 and Article 20(4)) of 11 March 2009 (OJ L 87, p. 164) stipulates the need to establish common principles and guidelines ensuring the confidentiality of data used for the production of European statistics and the access to those

confidential data with due account for technical developments and the requirements of users in a democratic society.

7.2. Confidentiality - data treatment

According to confidentiality policy rules (see section 7.1).

If data are of truly confidential nature according to the above mentioned regulation, they have to be flagged confidential, and they are not published by Eurostat.

8. Release policy

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8.1. Release calendar

The preliminary frames are released to statistical users according to the specific needs of statistical domains.

National statistical institutes (NSIs) provide aggregated data for the national business registers to Eurostat at t+17 months.

The final frames of the national statistical business registers are available to the statistical users at t+18 months at the latest.

8.2. Release calendar access

Not applicable.

8.3. Release policy - user access

The statistical users get an access to the NSBR frames or obtain the required data on request from Business register team at the NSIs.

9. Frequency of dissemination

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The NSBR preliminary frames are provided by NSIs to statistical users with different frequency. The frequency of preliminary frames could be as follows:

- monthly
- quarterly
- on request
- annually

The final frame is available on annual basis. The annual copy is kept by NSI for 30 years for the purpose of analysis.

10. Accessibility and clarity

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10.1. Dissemination format - News release

Not applicable.

10.2. Dissemination format - Publications

Not applicable.

10.3. Dissemination format - online database

Not applicable.

10.4. Dissemination format - microdata access

Not applicable.

10.5. Dissemination format - other

NSIs provide aggregated data on national statistical business register annually to Eurostat in the national quality report.

National statistical business registers are the main source of information for producing the business demography statistics that provide information on active enterprises in the business economy, the births, deaths and survival rates of enterprises, as well as information on related employment data. In the business demography domain, the business economy covers sections B to N, excluding activities of holding companies – K64.2 (NACE Rev.2).

10.6. Documentation on methodology

The [European business statistics methodological manual for statistical business registers – edition 2021](#) outlines the methodology to be used for the European statistical business registers.

10.7. Quality management - documentation

ESS data quality programme (DQP) for statistical business registers is designed by Eurostat in collaboration with EU Member States. The DQP is implemented within the core EBS compliance and quality framework.

Information on the DQP for European statistical business registers is available in a domain-specific [CIRCABC](#) folder (restricted access).

11. Quality management

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11.1. Quality assurance

European statistical business registers has to ensure high quality frames to the statistical users according to the ESS standards covering the implementation of principles derived from the [European Statistics Code of Practice](#) (ES CoP) and the [Quality Assurance Framework of the European Statistical System](#) (ESS QAF).

Together with the general quality management principles, the ES CoP and the ESS QAF constitute the common quality framework of the ESS, based on which high-quality European Statistics are developed, produced and disseminated.

The EBS Regulation provides a common framework with regard to data requirements, quality, as well as data and metadata transmission. The quality of the national statistical business register is managed and assured by the EU Member States. NSIs apply specific quality assurance procedures to the statistical processes and quality assessment procedures, such as user satisfaction survey, self-assessment, peer review, quality monitoring, audit, etc.

11.2. Quality management - assessment

The statistical analysis of the national statistical business register is carried out by NSIs to ensure the quality of data and frames provided to users, including aggregates annually provided to Eurostat in the national quality report.

The quality assessment of the national statistical business registers is done annually by Eurostat using a set of four quality indicators monitoring the punctuality, the completeness, the accuracy and reliability and the coherence and comparability. Moreover, NSIs sent to Eurostat metadata about their national statistical business registers.

12. Relevance

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12.1. Relevance - User Needs

The main role of the statistical business registers is to provide a basic infrastructure for the preparation and coordination of surveys as well as for the production of consistent and high quality European statistics.

SBR are important for the compilation of consistent and comparable European business statistics, establishing efficient statistical survey frames, providing identification numbers of all the units and for linking to many different sources, increasing statistical information and reducing the reporting burden on enterprises.

Statistical business registers are referred to as the ‘backbone’ in the production of economic statistics because they provide the core infrastructure to ensure data consistency between various statistical outputs.

12.2. Relevance - User Satisfaction

Since 2017, Eurostat together with the EU Member States conducts SBR user survey addressing users and potential users of the European statistical business registers.

The latest SBR User Survey 2023 show that the NSBR are widely used at national level and users consider that national statistical business registers are of very good quality. Most of the statistical users (75%) use the NSBR as an authoritative source for national statistical business register populations, i.e. as a sole provider of data records for the given population.

The results of the SBR User Survey 2023 are available on [CIRCABC](#).

12.3. Completeness

The completeness of the NSBR data is annually assessed by Eurostat under framework of the SBR Data Quality Programme. The SBR assessment results are provided to EU Member States and EFTA countries and presented at the Business Registers and Statistical Units Working Group.

13. Accuracy

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13.1. Accuracy - overall

The accuracy of the NSBR frames is measured by NSIs and reported in the national metadata reports. The accuracy component for NSBRs is evaluated by Eurostat annually within core EBS compliance and quality framework.

More details on procedures handled by EU countries to ensure the accuracy of NSBR data are provided in the national metadata reports, attached to this report.

13.2. Sampling error

Not applicable.

13.3. Non-sampling error

Not applicable.

14. Timeliness and punctuality

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14.1. Timeliness

The annual copy of the national statistical business register should be available 12 months after the end of the reference year t. In any case, this copy has to be available no later than 16 months after the reference year t.

EU Member States transmit data on the final frame annually to Eurostat in the NSBR quality report. The national quality report with NSBR data is provided to Eurostat at T+17 months after

the reference period.

14.2. Punctuality

The NSBR frames are provided on time to statistical users with regard to their needs.

15. Coherence and comparability

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15.1. Comparability - geographical

The geographical comparability of national statistical business registers is ensured by the application of common definitions of the statistical units laid down in the Council Regulation (EEC) No 696/93.

The variables of the NSBRs are harmonised according the European framework for statistical business registers and defined in the [EBS methodological manual for Statistical Business Registers \(2021 edition\)](#)

15.2. Comparability - over time

The availability of consistent data on national statistical business registers is essential for the needs of statistical users. The national statistical business registers frames are comparable over time by applying a common framework for business registers for statistical purposes.

The comparability over time of the frames results from the information provided in concept 3.8.

15.3. Coherence - cross domain

The NSBR frames provide information on the active population of enterprises carrying out economic activities which contribute to the gross domestic product (GDP), the legal units of which those enterprises consist of, local units, kind of activity units and enterprise groups, incl. all-resident and multinational enterprise groups.

The national statistical business register is used by statistical users as a coordinated frame population in order to derive consistent statistical output.

Within the EBS quality framework, Eurostat monitors the coherence of data for the Business and trade statistics domains. The 'coherence and comparability' of the NSBR is monitored based on the comparisons of selected aggregates/variables reported in the NSBR quality report and those that are available to Eurostat in relation to other business and trade statistics domains, e.g. EuroGroups register (EGR), Structural business statistics (SBS) and Business demography (BD).

15.4. Coherence - internal

The NSBR data included in the final frame are internally consistent. The internal coherence is monitored by the NSBR data base system via a large number of checks. Furthermore, analyses, which focus on this aspect, are carried out. Coherence rules are systematically applied to the statistical units in the relational model. In addition, the main variables linked to the related statistical units are subject to consistency analysis. This allows to guarantee relevant degrees of internal coherence for the NSBR data.

16. Cost and Burden

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Not available.

17. Data revision

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17.1. Data revision - policy

Not applicable.

17.2. Data revision - practice

Not applicable.

18. Statistical processing

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18.1. Source data

The national statistical business registers are set up in accordance with the EBS Regulation (EU) 2019/2152 using any relevant data sources, including administrative and statistical sources, while avoiding excessive burden on respondents and taking into account of the cost effectiveness of the NSIs. In addition, some countries are using data from commercial data sources and other relevant sources.

18.2. Frequency of data collection

The national statistical business registers are updated continuously. BR shall be updated by means of entries and removals at least annually. The frequency of updating depends on the kind of unit, the variable considered, the size of the unit and the sources generally used for the update.

18.3. Data collection

Statistical business registers use data from administrative and statistical data sources, and from any other relevant sources that are comparable and compliant with the applicable specific quality requirements.

18.4. Data validation

Statistical analysis of the national statistical business register are carried out to ensure the quality of data and frame populations provided to statistical users.

NSBRs perform automatic validation procedures to check completeness and coherence between statistical units and their variables, format and file structure, plausibility checks, crosschecks with other sources and data from previous years, etc.

For more details on national practices, please consult the national metadata reports attached.

18.5. Data compilation

The procedures used to combine data from different sources and production of the frame populations and annual copy of national statistical business register are described in the national metadata reports attached to this report.

18.6. Adjustment

Not applicable.

19. Comment

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Not available.

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