Initiation of Statistical Business Register in Nepal: Status, Challenges and Prospects in reaching maturity model

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Abstract

Statistical Business Register (SBR) is a prerequisite infrastructure for the development of robust economic statistics in national statistical system. Keeping in view the usefulness, reliability, coverage and availability of the statistics produced within the statistical Statistics System, it is imperative to have Statistical Business Register in Nepal. The then Central Bureau of Statistics of Nepal (now it is named National Statistics Office-NSO) initiated in setting statistical business register of the country after the institutional unit established within bureau in 2014 for conducting economic census and establish statistical business register. The bureau conducted economic census of the country for the first time covering 18 sections of international standard industrial classification (ISIC revision 4). It executed 923,356 establishments which constituted about half of the establishment unregistered. The census result has been assumed as a benchmark of statistical business register. The primary purpose of establishing SBR is to provide frames for different surveys of business activities and generating basic economic statistics in sustainable way.

NSO Nepal has been collecting information of the registered establishments via district level statistics offices approaching to different authoritative registration offices. SBR is being developed mainly from different sources like Economic Census and administrative data sources. Although the NSO has initiated in setting statistical business register, a number of challenges have been faced while accessing and collecting information required for the SBR of Nepal. Some of the challenges are heterogeneity of record keeping system at various administrative registration offices, multi-door system of registration of establishments, data sharing constraints to NSO, absence of data sharing legislations and culture, low level of statistical literacy, absence of unique identifier of establishments, checking duplication and operational status, coordination and cooperation.

Despite the many challenges in acquiring and maintaining SBR, there exists some prospects as well for setting SBR in Nepal. First of all, NSO has economic census section as institutional unit having task to develop statistical business register. This can be considered as a primary

requirement in proceeding SBR development process. Economic Census 2018 has provided benchmark information required for establishing SBR in Nepal. The frame from Economic census 2018 has been utilized for conducting sectoral surveys like industrial survey, trade survey and rebasing of national account statistics. Budget has been allocated to statistics offices for training and data collection for SBR. A prototype CSPro- based application program has been developed to integrate data from statistics offices.   Recently, statistics act 2022 has been promulgated which mandates national statistics office to acquire the administrative data sources for the purpose of data integration. Some human resources are made trained about role of SBR and information collection, compilation procedure for SBR. It is learnt that administrative data sources of registered establishments have to be strengthened to be fully functional of the SBR development process. With the perspective of maturity level, the current SBR development process of Nepal can be assumed to be at early stage.   In future, there is a scope of improved statistical business registers system in Nepal.