

The primary source of data for the production of statistics should be administrative data, i.e. the data generated or collected by state and local government agencies and legal entities. Economic units should only be asked to provide data when the quality of available administrative data does not meet the statistical requirements or when the necessary data are not available in administrative sources. In the production of annual business statistics, statistical questionnaires are pre-filled in eSTAT (Statistics Estonia's electronic data submission channel) with the data from annual reports that enterprises have provided to the Commercial Register. Respondents have to complete only the fields for indicators not available in annual reports. Administrative data and using them to pre-fill questionnaires in eSTAT are used also for other statistical surveys.

Business surveys are sample surveys as a rule. Populations of small economic units, e.g. with less than 20 employees, are sampled and the rest are investigated totally. However, it is characteristic for business surveys to have an asymmetric population: there is a small number of large units and a large number of small units. In the estimation of totals (e.g. total turnover, total profit, number of employees, etc.), the few large units make a significant contribution while the contribution of the many small units is often negligible. Therefore, it makes sense to use cut-off sampling, to build models for estimating the part of units not observed, and to implement administrative data to get parameters for those models.