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CONSTRUCTING FRAMES TO TARGET DIFFICULT-TO-REACH BUSINESS SURVEY POPULATIONS

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ABSTRACT

A Business Register (BR) based on administrative tax data is an appropriate basis for frames used for most economic surveys. Some surveys of businesses, however, target populations that cannot be efficiently and cost-effectively accessed using the BR alone. Perhaps the BR does not fully cover the population (in the nonprofit sector, for example) or it does not contain variables needed to identify a required sub-population or appropriate contact persons. In interests of efficiency and quality, Statistics Canada survey-takers are finding ways of combining information from several sources with the BR to construct survey frames to enable more efficient access to their populations of interest.

Some traditional approaches can be costly. A multiple frames approach can ensure good coverage of a population, but this may not be the most efficient way to survey the population, especially if there is overlap to be resolved. Also, with a traditional two-phased approach, the steps of tracing, contacting and validating units, in the first phase, use a substantial portion of the collection budget. It makes sense to do “up front” work to construct a more cost effective frame before undertaking a survey.

This paper will present and evaluate several approaches that have been used to construct or augment frames for a variety of Statistics Canada surveys of business respondents. On the basis of these experiences, some good practices for frame construction and use will be proposed.

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