

Voorburg Group 2016 – Poster session Alternative data Accounting data automatically generates the Swedish SBS questionnaire – summary of questions and points raised

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Background

At Statistics Sweden (SCB) we have for some years collected data for the Structural Business Survey (SBS) via the use of standardized format (SIE). For the reference year 2011 Statistics Sweden conducted a pilot to study the use of file transfer. The aim was to find out how the SIE format, combined with the option for respondents to complete the web questionnaire with data not included in the SIE-file, would work. About 95 per cent of the businesses in Sweden use the Swedish chart of accounts (BAS). A first step was therefore to create a data file where the SBS survey variables were mapped with the BAS Accounting Plan. Although most enterprises chose not to use the SIE option, we found the results promising enough to continue the test. During the following years we gradually added more industries and thus more enterprises gradually was given the opportunity to use the SIE solution. For the reference year 2015 almost all enterprises (except for the large enterprises) are given this opportunity.

Benefits for the enterprises

Almost 50 per cent of the variables in the questionnaire are filled in automatically from the text file (SIE), the rest has to be manually completed. Most of the respondents experience a lower burden.

Benefits for SBS

- The costs in the questionnaire are distributed on more variables than before.
- Significantly lower proportion of costs on “Other expenses”.

Summary of questions and points raised by the Voorburg Group members

- The question about legal issues was raised. In some countries, this solution is not possible because the legislation does not allow it.
- The response from enterprises to this solution? Almost all companies that use this option are satisfied. The time to fill in the questionnaire have been reduced by half.
- Are there differences between data submitted to the Tax Office and the data in the SIE-file? We have noticed that the content in the tax data and in the SIE-file differ for some enterprises. We plan to investigate why this is the case. One theory that came up at the meeting was that it can be a question of different units.
- Future plans? We plan to continue this work and try to collect data from the accounting systems as far as it is possible.

