

FIFTH INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON BUSINESS DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGY

19-21 SEPTEMBER 2018 – STATISTICS PORTUGAL, LISBON

Notifying and training procedure for respondents (enterprises, households) in Statistics Estonia

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Background paper

The main task of Statistics Estonia is to provide reliable and objective information about Estonia. In order to do that, data are collected from enterprises, databases and individuals. If possible, data from state registers are used for statistics production. As the production of statistics requires also information which is not included in the registers, data need to be collected directly from enterprises and institutions as well.

In 2017, ~50% of questionnaires were submitted by the deadline and ~78 % were submitted by the end of the collection period.

A notifications and training procedure has been developed in Statistics Estonia to inform enterprises about what data to submit and when and how to do this.

Upon failure to submit data or submission of distorted data, the producer of official statistics has the right to issue a precept for elimination of the violation to the respondent. Upon failure to comply with the precept, the producer of official statistics may impose a penalty payment pursuant to the procedure provided for in the Substitutive Enforcement and Penalty Payment Act. A procedure for penalty payments has been developed for imposing penalty payments.

Since 2017, Statistics Estonia has imposed penalty payments on non-respondents of data of 7 statistical activities.

Notifications – economic entities

For the submission of data, an electronic data submission environment [eSTAT](#) has been developed. eSTAT allows safe, quick and convenient submission of data collected for official statistical activities; in addition, the environment is used to notify data providers – to send various letters.

Data providers are notified of the obligation to submit data, about an approaching expired deadline. The letters are composed by the Data Processing and Registers Department in cooperation with the Marketing and Dissemination Department. The texts of the letters (in Estonian and English) are entered into the application's module for managing letters. In addition to e-mails, the application prepares paper letters files with the postal addresses of enterprises. For each letter sent to an economic entity, a contact record is created in eSTAT. Economic entities can view all their contact records as well as the content of each letter in eSTAT. Letters to data providers are sent either to the eSTAT main user, to executive manager of the enterprise / economic entity or, if their information is not available, to the general e-mail address of the enterprise.

Notifications about the data submission obligation are sent by eSTAT automatically. The enterprises/households that do not have an e-mail address in eSTAT receive notifications by regular mail. All enterprises/households whose e-mail address has bounced back to

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Statistics Estonia's e-mail (wrong or incorrect address) are automatically added to the list of those who receive paper notifications.

■ 15 December – notification about obligations in the following calendar year

The notification letter includes the following information:

- ❖ The questionnaires which the enterprise must submit in the following year have been listed on Statistics Estonia's website under menu item "[Obligation to submit data](#)" and are visible to the enterprise after entering the registry code – questionnaires, periods, deadlines, important information about data submission (questionnaire pages have links to the information about the purpose of data collection, main users, information about where the data are used, published, etc.).
- ❖ For data submission, we recommend using the electronic data collection environment eSTAT. Links to information about joining and using eSTAT have been added.
- ❖ Information about Statistics Estonia's right to issue a precept to the respondent for elimination of the violation resulting from failure to submit data or submission of distorted data.
- ❖ A list of obligations has been added (questionnaires, periods).

A letter sent on the 12th of each month, which informs of being added to a survey sample during the year, includes the same information.

Other notifications are sent (until the upgrade of eSTAT) by Statistics Estonia's customer support (Data Processing and Registers Department).

After the application's upgrade, all dataset (data collection and processing) teams can start sending additional reminders and other notifications through the application.

We thank respondents for their cooperation:

- ❖ Upon ending data collection with a questionnaire, we inform respondents about the data sources which are going to be used for data collection in the future.
- ❖ When we send year-end greetings to enterprises who have submitted their data on time in the calendar year

We inform respondents before data collection:

- ❖ About the objective and importance of the statistical activity, reason for data collection, data users, etc. Letters are sent to all enterprises of a relevant questionnaire that have been added to the sample during the calendar year and/or have previously not submitted their data. We send inform-letters, for example, for questionnaires EKOMAR – Economic activity (year), Economic activity (quarter); Intrastat; Manufactured goods; Innovation Survey, etc.

In the notification letter, we also inform about the availability of more detailed information on Statistics Estonia's website: <https://www.stat.ee/esms-metaddata>.

- ❖ eSTAT main users – notification at the beginning of the year about their data submission rights and obligations in the calendar year
- ❖ Information to new respondents about joining eSTAT – how to join, functions, their rights and obligations. We also inform about the availability of information on Statistics Estonia's website under menu item "Submit data" - <https://www.stat.ee/en>

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- ❖ Economic entities submitting data outside eSTAT (paper, e-mail) – information letter referring to eSTAT, where we inform why it is safe, convenient and informative to submit data in the eSTAT application. We ask that in the future data be submitted in eSTAT.

Reminders are sent to enterprises that have not submitted their data to Statistics Estonia (partially completed questionnaires are regarded as questionnaires not submitted). The letters are sent automatically by eSTAT on specified dates – 5 days prior and 3, 7 and 20 days after the submission deadline. (Appendix 1)

In addition to the reminders sent from the eSTAT system, also separate reminders can be sent to economic entities:

- ❖ When necessary, to respondents of questionnaires with a longer collection period who have not submitted data by deadline
- ❖ In the case of INTRASTAT questionnaires not yet started – reminders are sent by client support on the 25th date each month about all the missing periods.

Notifications – social surveys

All sample persons (households) of social surveys are sent a notification of being added to the survey:

- ❖ To an e-mail address if it is included in the sample information and if the survey methodology or client does not prescribe otherwise
- ❖ To a postal address if an e-mail address is not available

The lists of letters are prepared in the Survey Fieldwork Information System (VVIS). The records of sending letters are registered automatically in the system for each sample person / household. This is important information for both interviewers and customer support. Notification letters are also translated into Russian. The letters are e-mailed by Statistics Estonia's customer support. Notifications on paper are sent through the e-environment of Estonian Post Office.

The notification letters include:

- ❖ An overview of the survey, what is asked and who are surveyed
- ❖ An explanation about how the survey is conducted (methods)
- ❖ Time of participating in the survey (range of dates)
- ❖ An explanation about where to find additional information

In the case of the CAWI method, a website link is added which can be used to access the questionnaire. In addition, reminders are sent once a week during the fieldwork period. Letters of participating in the survey by using the CAWI method are sent only to persons whose e-mail address is available in the sample information.

In the case of the CATI method, information is added, that for better service and to ensure the quality of data, the phone call is recorded by Statistics Estonia.

In the case of the CAPI method, the interviewer's name and phone number are added so that the respondent could contact the interviewer to set up a suitable time for the interview.

Training – economic entities

According to the Official Statistics Act, data submission is mandatory for economic activities and Statistics Estonia has the right to impose a penalty payment upon failure to submit data. Therefore, Statistics Estonia strives to make sure that it is easy and convenient for data providers to submit data. We wish to introduce to the managers, accountants, etc. of enterprises / economic entities the objectives of specific statistical activities for which the enterprises must

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submit data, and instruct and consult them on using eSTAT, completing questionnaires and on the sources which are used to pre-fill the questionnaires.

Various training is offered to respondents throughout the year:

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- ❖ Training about questionnaires
- ❖ Training about changes or adjustments in questionnaires
- ❖ Training to new data providers in samples about using the electronic channel eSTAT and completing questionnaires in eSTAT

Training can be carried out in Tallinn (the location of Statistics Estonia) and, depending on the availability of training rooms in other cities. Local municipalities can be consulted about the availability of rooms.

Who is invited to training?

We send training invitations to enterprises / economic entities:

- ❖ That did not submit data in the previous period
- ❖ That have been added to a sample in the current calendar year

Information on organised training, the training programmes and materials are available on Statistics Estonia's website under menu item "Submit data". Registration for training also takes place here. Enterprises that have not received an invitation can register for training as well. On our website, information on training is only in Estonian, as we provide training only in Estonian.

Training about questionnaires

When selecting questionnaires for training, we consider the following:

- ❖ Whether new questionnaires have been added or changes have been made in current questionnaires
- ❖ Whether the completion of a particular questionnaire is difficult for respondents
- ❖ The percentage of questionnaires submitted by deadline

About the questionnaires

■ The purpose is to introduce:

- ❖ The aims of statistical activities
- ❖ Why the data of each and every enterprise are important
- ❖ Data sources and opportunities for pre-filling questionnaires
- ❖ Changes in questionnaires/classifications compared to the previous year (if there have been any)
- ❖ Completing and submitting questionnaires
- ❖ Frequently made mistakes when completing questionnaires
- ❖ Finding and using data on Statistics Estonia's website
<http://andmebaas.stat.ee/?lang=en>

About the data submission application eSTAT

■ The aim is to introduce:

- ❖ The functionalities of the application in general
- ❖ Creating users in eSTAT
- ❖ Data submission options in eSTAT
- ❖ Functional requirements for questionnaire completion
- ❖ Loading, checking and confirming questionnaires

Training providers are – heads of statistical activities, customer support supervisor and leading statistician of the source database (collection and processing) team.

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For every training session organised, we send participants a feedback form. The link to the feedback form is sent to the e-mail address that the participant provided during registration for training.

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The form includes the following questions (questions may vary depending on questionnaire):

- ❖ Did the training session meet your needs?
- ❖ What is your assessment of the clarity of the information provided about the objectives and content of the questionnaire and about the use of the data collected?
- ❖ What is your assessment of the clarity of the information provided about...
The question is formulated based on the content of the training session.
- ❖ What is your assessment of the organisation of the training session (availability of material, providing information, etc.)?
- ❖ What did you like / did not like about the training session?
- ❖ What training subjects of Statistics Estonia would be you interested in in the future?
- ❖ What are your suggestions concerning Statistics Estonia's future training sessions?

In addition, we send each enterprise that received a training invitation (irrespective of whether they participated in the training session or not) a link to the training materials, so that there would be an option to review the materials when necessary.

The summaries of feedback forms will be available to all training providers and the training organiser, so that training sessions to data providers could be made more informative and accessible.

This year, we started developing video tutorials. The first one is a tutorial for the eSTAT application. For building the videos, three tutorials for the application were recorded, which will be used for making short video clips on various topics. These will be added to the training materials on the website.

We have planned to develop similar video tutorials also for various questionnaires.

Training – social surveys

In the case of social surveys, training is provided only to interviewers.

Training organised for interviewers:

- ❖ Basic training for new interviewers
- ❖ Surveys and questionnaires
- ❖ Training on interviewers' electronic application
- ❖ Motivational training

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Appendix 1

Reminders

Title	Time	Purpose	Addressee
Data submission deadline approaching	5 days before the deadline	Notification about the approaching data submission deadline. Suggestion and instructions about submitting data electronically.	Respondent If respondent is missing, the main user If main user is missing, the manager If manager is missing, enterprise's general e-mail address
Data submission in eSTAT in progress	1 day before the deadline	Notification about the data submission deadline on the following day , while questionnaire completion is still in progress . Please complete and confirm the questionnaire by deadline.	The last to save the questionnaire – external or internal user
		Data submission deadline	
Data submission in eSTAT in progress , deadline expired	1 day before the first reminder	Notification about expired deadline and half-completed questionnaire . Please complete and confirm the questionnaire.	The last to save the questionnaire – external or internal user
Data not submitted to Statistics Estonia	3 days after the deadline	Hereby we inform you that you have not submitted your data by deadline. Please submit the data immediately. We would like to remind you that data submission is mandatory according to the Official Statistics Act.	Main user and data provider In the absence of main user, the manager In the absence of both, enterprise's general e-mail address

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Data submission in eSTAT in progress	1 day before the second reminder	Reminder to the last person to save the questionnaire that the data submission deadline has expired, but questionnaire completion is still in progress. Please complete and confirm the questionnaire.	The last to save the questionnaire – external or internal user
Title	Time	Purpose	Addressee
Data not submitted to Statistics Estonia	7 days after the deadline	Hereby we inform you that you have not submitted your data by deadline. Please submit the data immediately. We would like to remind you that data submission is mandatory according to the Official Statistics Act, and Statistics Estonia has the right to issue a precept-warning and impose a penalty payment.	Main user and manager If main user and manager are the same person, only one letter is sent In the absence of main user + manager, enterprise's general e-mail address
Precept-warning	According to the penalty payment process	Statistics Estonia obliges enterprises to submit the data collected with questionnaires. A new deadline has been set. If the addressee does not comply with the precept by the imposed deadline, or does not voluntarily make the penalty payment, the precept is forwarded to a bailiff for enforcement proceedings. Voluntary payment of penalty fee does not exempt from the data submission obligation	Registered e-mail and registered regular mail to the enterprise's legal address
Unfulfilled obligation	20 days after the deadline	Hereby we inform you that you have not submitted your data by deadline. Please submit the data immediately	Main user and manager If main user and manager are the same person, only one letter is sent In the absence of main user + manager, enterprise's general e-mail address