



## Role of administrative registers for agricultural statistics

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### ABSTRACT

The Government has three main missions: to ensure the internal and external safety of the society, to create necessary prerequisites for sustainable development of every member of the society and to ensure the minimal needs of those members of the society, who can't yet/no more to cover their needs by themselves. Authorities who carry out the realization of state mission are government bodies that have administrative power (ministries, administrations, etc.), local self-government bodies and government bodies that render public services (non-administrative). Tools for administrative influence (for administrative competences) are registration and calculation of rights and liabilities, activity endorsement, permissions, prohibitions and prevention, encouragement and destruction, regulation and control. There are other tools for administrative influence such as checking, correction, inspection, monitoring, discussions of disputes and solutions, enforcement of penalties and restrictions, privileges, reimbursements, and gratuitous assistance, etc. The main principles of forming the administrative registers are definitions of concepts and criteria, classifications (status, type of activity, production, and administrative territorial and other units), coding (common identification codes), individual addressable information (developed as a result of using administrative tools). The administrative registers are individual addressable databases that are used by state and local self-government bodies, and are the basis and effect for administrative influence. The administrative registers are used by bodies that create administrative registers (realization of their individual addressable administrative influence authority), other bodies that possess administrative authority (by identifying it with individual data from other administrative registers), statistical bodies (for providing public statistical services), scientific and educational institutions and individual researchers (for providing scientific and research and educational services).

The peculiarity of use of administrative registers by official statistics is that official statistics, as a provider of statistical information, is entitled to use and modify the information received from administrative registers in order to ensure their compliance and comparability with statistical definitions and classifications. The data that is received in this way cannot be transferred to the primary information holder (administrative register) or transferred to the third party for the purpose of using them for administrative purposes.

Given the fact that for agriculture as a type of economic activity there are specific factors such as measurements regulated by the administrative legislation like the land, machinery, other fixed assets (from the viewpoint of property registration on land, machinery, other fixed assets and relations on their taxation), subsidies to economic units (from the viewpoint of the relevant administrative registrations and monitoring), numbering and movement of the livestock, including diseases control, etc., so the use of administrative registers, as a source of E-based information is actual and urgent.

Use of administrative registers is also stipulated by the fact that agricultural technologies by their character require more detailed regulation and control by administrative bodies, therefore, and more disaggregated registrations that are crucial for complete statistical indicators with the higher degree of aggregation.

**Keywords:** Administrative bodies, administrative records, definitions, classifications.

## 1. Introduction

In Armenia, under the centralized planning of the economy, the official statistics was used as consolidated and fragmented information for authorities. Official statistics mainly played the role of administrative information systems for government agencies at all the levels. Such practice took place in the transition period until 1999, when the Eurostat developed and presented the scheme of a model law on statistics based on the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. Based on that model law the National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia (NSSRA) has developed the new law "On State Statistics" that has been adopted by the Armenian Parliament and came into force on 10th May 2000.

## 2. Formation of administrative registers in transition period

According to the above-mentioned law, the change of the functions of statistics from a "state accountant" to a role of an information supplier for the whole society, economy and authorities is a process that should proceed in parallel in the framework of official statistics and administrative information systems.

However, in conditions of liberal economy an old inertia, which took place in the administrative cycles, hampered the process of formation of administrative registers. The official statistics supplier's legal refusal to draw up administrative information has certainly accelerated the process of formation of administrative information systems in the country. Laws on social cards, population register, securities market and others have been adopted. Amendments have been made to laws regulating the powers of administrative bodies on formation and maintenance of administrative registers both by activity and certain functions. In particular, by functions of state registration (property rights register, entrepreneurship rights, shareholders and others).

Powers for establishing administrative registers have been assigned to the general state agencies. However, this process is not always smooth, even with the methodological support of the NSSRA. The main reason for the complications of the process of formation of national registers is the lack of registers at the level of communities and regions.

In Armenia, with a population of 3 million there are 915 communities, of which 866 are rural, most of which are very small. Because of lack of resources the majority of communities (local self-government bodies) are not able to organize and establish administrative registers. Based on the new edition of the Law “On local self-government” the process to delegate new and necessary powers to communities has started, which has created a basis for their consolidation and implementation of the full administrative registration system. In particular, since 2004, the authority to collect the property tax has been delegated to urban communities, and, since 2005, the process has been extended to rural communities. In 2005, the country's population register has been established and started from the involving of communities.

### **3. Challenges of formation of administrative registers at the community level in transition countries**

Taking into account the above mentioned developments, the NSSRA has developed and tested a model “passports of communities and regions”, which are the necessary minimum sets of basic indicators describing the administrative information system of these territorial units. The piloting process has revealed a number of unsolved problems, connected with:

- technical equipment,
- professional training,
- methodological support,
- organizational links with regional and nation-wide registers,
- identification problems on perception other administrative and statistical registers, etc.

According to the description and analysis of the current situation there are the following tasks in transition countries:

- a clear definition of statistical and administrative purposes and character of links between them,
- providing guarantees for non-involvement of official statistics in the conflict of administrative and similar interests,
- a clear legal distinction between statistical and administrative information,
- formation of a complete system of administrative information in the country,
- providing easy use of administrative information for statistical purposes,
- promotion of expanding the scope of the administrative information on the basis of modern information and communication technologies,
- developing methodologies and improving the quality of administrative information,
- developing and improving statistical methodology for the use of administrative records for statistical purposes.

#### 4. General factors of formation of administrative registers in transition countries

There are the following factors that could help to solve the above-mentioned tasks:

- general accounting and statistical culture of the country,
- complexity of the payment and accounting system of the country,
- completeness of reforms in the country's management system,
- level and scale of the use of international standards and classifications in the payment and accounting system of the country,
- universality, accessibility and comparability of the methodology used at national and international levels,
- degree of complexity (simplification) of procedures and tools of state registration, licensing, permits, etc.
- level of self-regulation of local self-government bodies.

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that for countries in transition a starting point to solve the above mentioned problems, from the NSS RA` point of view, is an intensification of stimulating formation of administrative registers at the community level. This process has not just statistical and administrative value, but also political one. Strengthening the accounting capacity of communities will enhance their role as a source of administrative information, thus reducing the possibility of the temptation to use statistical data for administrative purposes that at the same time will improve the quality and integrity of the state administrative registers.

In general, this process will affect on the ability of the interactive character of administrative information, thus highlighting the problem of perception of information flows in both administrative and statistical systems. All this, in a long run will promote to improve the quality of information and to achieve a high level confidence in any information systems, and to form an information society.

#### 5. The Government mission as a basis to form administrative registers

The Government has three main missions: to ensure the internal and external safety of the society, to create necessary prerequisites for sustainable development of every member of the society and to ensure the minimal needs of those members of the society, who can't yet/no more to cover their needs by themselves.

Authorities who carry out the realization of state mission are government bodies that have administrative powers (ministries, administrations, etc.), local self-government bodies and government bodies that render public services (non-administrative).

Tools for administrative influence (for administrative competences) are registration and calculation of rights and liabilities, activity endorsement, permissions, prohibitions and prevention, encouragement and destruction, regulation and control. There are other tools for administrative influence such as checking, correction, inspection, monitoring, discussions of disputes and solutions, enforcement of penalties and restrictions, privileges, reimbursements, and gratuitous assistance, etc.

The main principles of forming administrative registers are definitions of concepts and criteria, classifications (status, type of activity, production, and administrative territorial and other units), coding (common identification codes), individual addressable information (developed as a result of using administrative tools).

## 6. Main characteristics of administrative registers

The administrative registers are individual addressable databases that are used by state and local self-government bodies, and are the basis and effect for administrative influence. The administrative registers are used by bodies that create administrative registers (realization of their individual addressable administrative influence authority), other bodies that possess administrative authority (by identifying it with individual data from other administrative registers), statistical bodies (for providing public statistical services), scientific and educational institutions and individual researchers (for providing scientific and research and educational services).

## 7. Peculiarity of using administrative registers for agricultural statistics

The peculiarity of using administrative registers by official statistics is that official statistics, as a provider of statistical information, is entitled to use and modify information received from administrative registers in order to ensure their compliance and comparability with statistical definitions and classifications. The data that is received in this way cannot be transferred to the primary information holder (administrative register) or transferred to the third party for the purpose of using them for administrative purposes.

Given the fact that for agriculture as a type of economic activity there are specific factors such as measurements regulated by the administrative legislation like the land, machinery, other fixed assets (from the viewpoint of property registration on land, machinery, other fixed assets and relations on their taxation), subsidies to economic units (from the viewpoint of the relevant administrative registrations and monitoring), numbering and movement of the livestock, including diseases control, etc., so the use of administrative registers, as a source of E-based information is actual and urgent.

Use of administrative registers is also stipulated by the fact that agricultural technologies by their character require more detailed regulation and control by administrative bodies, therefore, and more disaggregated registrations that are crucial for complete statistical indicators with the higher degree of aggregation.

According to the RA Law “On State Statistics” and based on the results of agricultural census conducted for the first time in Armenia in 2014 and usage of relevant administrative registers, the NSSRA will establish a statistical farm register for statistical purposes that could be used as a frame for sample surveys, as well as to complete survey data, and could be linked with state administrative systems, particularly land balance, livestock and machinery registers.

The NSS RA actively cooperates and has close partnership relations with administrative data providers to assure the data quality. According to the RA Law “On State Statistics” the NSS RA effectively coordinates administrative statistics. The NSS RA has concluded the Agreements with owners of administrative data on the access to and use of administrative data for statistical purposes. The NSS RA provides methodological support, including training materials to ministries and other public authorities to properly manage their administrative registers.

## 8. Conclusion

In countries in the course of management reforms, the capacities of administrative registers in the field of administrative records should be strengthened, including technical capacity and training, as well as interrelations among them and with the NSOs should be enhanced to use common identification codes, definitions and classifications.

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