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**The Maturity Model for Statistical Business Registers**

**Abstract**

Statistical Business Registers are the backbone for the production of economic statistics and, in particular, business statistics. The UN Committee of Experts on Business and Trade Statistics (UNCEBTS), established in 2008, recognized the strategic importance of SBRs and established two Task teams to advance on the conceptual and practical development of SBR. The task team on Exhaustive Business Registers and the Task team on Capacity Building on SBR worked jointly to develop a maturity model for SBRs to guide countries in the continuous development of the SBR and assist the international community to identify priority areas for technical assistance to countries on SBR.

This paper describes the framework for the Maturity Model for SBR. The maturity model is organized around seven dimensions: (1) Legal and institutional framework, (2) Data sources for the SBR; (3) Maintenance and update of the SBR; (4) Coverage of the SBR; (5) Use of SBR; (6) IT environment; (7) Interoperability. Each dimension is characterized by four stages of development starting from preliminary, early, mature and advanced stage. The objective of the maturity model is not to provide an overall stage of development of the SBR, rather to identify the stages of development for each dimension so improvements of the SBR can be identified based on available resources.

The Maturity model is accompanied by a questionnaire that helps to identify the stage of development through a set of questions. This questionnaire is intended to be available online as an interactive self-assessment (where no responses are stored) and linked to existing training materials. The questionnaire will also be the basis for the conduct of a regular Global assessment on the status of implementation of SBRs in countries. The Global assessment on the implementation status of SBR is intended to be conducted every five years to monitor the development to SBRs in countries and provide inputs to international/regional organizations on priority areas for technical assistance.

The Manual on the Maturity Model for SBR is being finalized by the task teams of the UNCEBTS and a global consultation on the Manual is expected to take place in 4th Quarter of 2021 to seek feedback from countries and international/regional organizations on the conceptual and practical framework of the maturity model. Given the expertise of the members of the Wiesbaden Group, they will be particularly encouraged to participate in the global consultation and provide feedback on the maturity model.

This paper also elaborates on possible synergies between the Country Progress Reports of the Wiesbaden Group and the Global Assessment on the implementation status of SBR in countries.

**Keywords:** SBR, maturity model, global assessment, exhaustive business registers.

## 1 Introduction

Statistical Business Registers are the backbone for the production of economic statistics and, in particular, business statistics. The UN Committee of Experts on Business and Trade Statistics (UNCEBTS), established in 2018, recognized the strategic importance of SBRs. In its strategic view for business statistics [1], the UNCEBTS put forward an enterprise-centered approach for a better understanding of emerging phenomena by official statisticians, and for priority setting in improving the quality of business statistics. This approach is underpinned by a data production framework centered on “the crucial role of the Statistical Business Register (SBR) as the backbone of any current and future improvements in the relevance and accuracy of business statistics.” [1]

To reflect this strategic view, the UNCEBTS established two Task teams to advance on the conceptual and practical development of SBR: the task team on Exhaustive Business Registers and the Task team on Capacity Building on SBR. These two Task teams worked jointly to develop a strategic view of what an ideal SBR would look like in terms of roles and requirements for SBRs (“dot in the horizon”) and how to help countries continuously improve their SBR in a constant drive toward the “dot in the horizon”. The discussion led to the formulation of a Maturity Model for SBR in order to provide countries with a framework where they can more clearly see how to move toward the “dot in the horizon”

Section 2 provides an overview of the Maturity Model for SBR and a questionnaire that is being developed to support a self-assessment of the status of implementation of SBR in countries. Section 3 describes the use of the questionnaire to support a regular global assessment on the status of implementation of SBRs in countries. The global assessment is intended to monitor the development to SBRs in countries and provide inputs to international/regional organizations on priority areas for technical assistance. Finally, Section 4 provides an update on the finalization of the Manual on the Maturity Model for SBR which includes a global consultation with countries and international/regional organizations on the Manual on the Maturity Model for SBR.

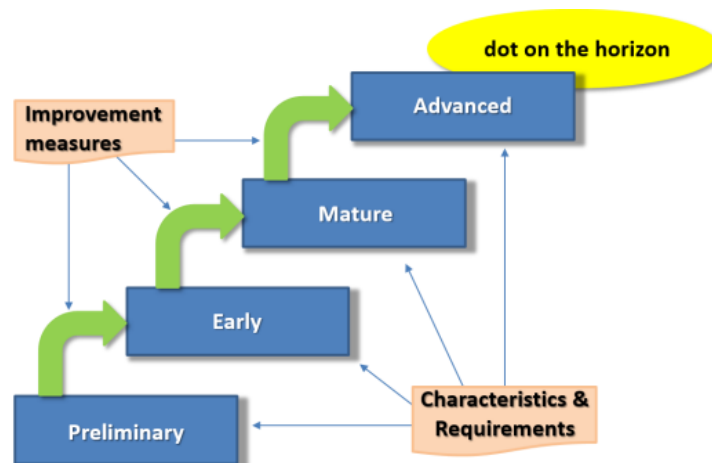
## 2 Maturity Model for SBR

The Maturity Model for SBR (for a more detailed description see the draft Manual [2]) is a framework to analyze the status of implementation of SBR, identify possible improvements of the SBR, and share knowledge and best practices in a clear and structured manner. The Maturity model is developed around seven dimensions that define an SBR. These dimensions are:

1. Legal and institutional framework. This dimension includes the legal and institutional framework relevant for establishing and maintaining the SBR.
2. Data sources for the SBR. This dimension includes the various data sources that the NSO can use to build and maintain the SBR.

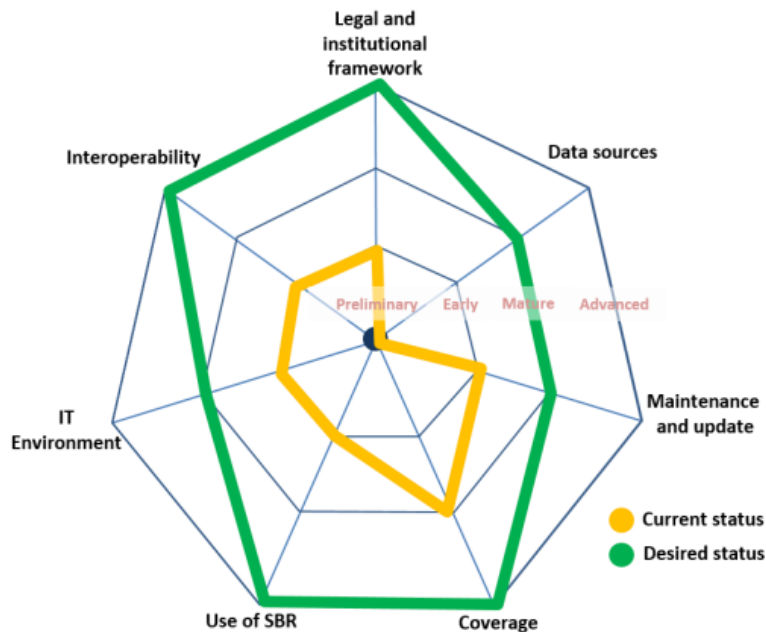
3. Maintenance and update of the SBR This dimension includes the maintenance and update procedures for the SBR, and in particular the operational requirements of maintaining effective and reliable systems.
4. Coverage of the SBR This dimension includes the coverage of the businesses in the SBR.
5. Use of SBR This dimension includes the use of the SBR, both by external users and internally within the NSO.
6. IT Environment This dimension includes the IT environment that supports the data storage, maintenance, update and dissemination of SBRs.
7. Interoperability. This dimension includes the ability of an SBR to communicate and exchange standardized data with other registers, be they domestic, regional, or global.

For each dimension, four stages of development were identified: preliminary stage, early stage, mature stage and advanced stage. Each stage generally follows the maturity levels of the Capability Maturity Model, and they are described in concrete characteristics of the SBR for a specific dimension. For example, the preliminary stage of dimension 1 ‘legal and institutional framework’ refers to the stage where there is no legal and institutional provision to support SBR. In the following stages there is a gradual movement toward a legislation that fully grants access to administrative sources by the NSO.



**Figure 1.** Conceptual visualization of the Maturity Model

In order to facilitate the use of the Maturity model, a questionnaire is being developed to help countries identify in which stage of development their SBR is for a specific dimension. It is important to note that by design the questionnaire does not give an overall assessment, rather separate assessment for each dimension. This is because the objective is not to give an overall rating to the SBR, rather identify specific areas of improvement. The response to the questionnaire can be visualized as presented in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Visualization of assessment results

The aim of the assessment of the level of maturity of the SBR is not to give a judgement to the SBR, but to describe the present situation and be able to see what steps can or should be taken to further develop the SBR to the next step in a certain dimension. The maturity model should therefore be viewed as a tool to help a NSO to find out what actions will lead to the improvement of their SBR. Once the NSO has applied the maturity model to its SBR, it can identify the actions that will help it transit to the next maturity level based on its legal, human, technical and financial constraints. The Maturity model also provides links to guidelines and other relevant material that describe general methods for a NSO to achieve the next stage of a specific dimension. Important instruments to advance in a specific dimension are:

- Reference to specific passages in handbooks and guidelines
- Reference to documented best practices, like
  - Procedures and methods
  - Dialogue frameworks
  - Chain management
  - Partnerships
- Organization of workshops or Study Visits
- Adoption of Agile methodology or Lean Operational Management

The Task teams are supporting UNSD to develop an interactive website for the maturity model that allows for an interactive self-assessment and for the link between the maturity

model and relevant handbooks and training materials that are closely related to specific aspects of the maturity model.

It is the intention to keep the maturity model up to date with future developments, so it will be important to share best practices. In this way, the maturity model can also serve as a knowledge base for statistical business registers.

### **3 Questionnaire for the UN Global Assessment of the SBR in countries**

The questionnaire that is being developed for the maturity model will also serve as the basis for a UN Global Assessment on the status of implementation of SBR in all countries. The global assessment is intended to be regularly conducted, say every 5 years, to monitor the status of implementation of SBRs in countries and identify priority areas for the development of technical assistance activities.

In this regard, it will be important to identify possible synergies between this global assessment on the status of implementation of SBR in countries (to be conducted regularly say, every 5 years with all countries) and the Country progress report (CPR) of the Wiesbaden group (which is reported every 2 years by participants of the Wiesbaden group meeting). The questionnaire on the maturity model and the CPR provide very useful information on the status of implementation of SBR, emerging area and challenging areas for SBRs. We could consider combining this information for the global assessment to provide a more in depth understanding of the status of implementation of SBR in countries. The Wiesbaden Group is invited to provide its views on the coordination of these activities.

### **4 Finalization of the Manual on the Maturity Model for SBR**

The Manual on the Maturity Model for SBR is currently being finalized by the two task teams of the UNCEBTS and it is expected that a global consultation on the final draft Manual will be conducted in 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2021.

The objective of the global consultation is to consult with countries on the proposed framework and the objectives of the maturity model. The outcome of the global consultation will be important for the finalization of the Manual and for its submission to the United Nations Statistical Commission in 2022.

Given its expertise on SBRs, the Wiesbaden group is particularly encouraged to review the draft Manual and participate in the global consultation.

### **References**

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