

DEVELOPING A STATISTICAL BUSINESS REGISTER (SBR) IN MYANMAR 2019

Documentation of process
and results



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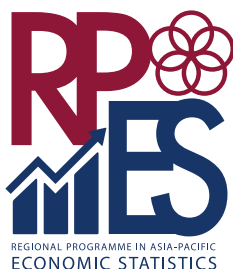
Documentation of process and results

This is a replication study of the development of a Statistical Business Register in Myanmar as part of the Regional Programme of Economics Statistics in Asia and the Pacific run by UN ESCAP supported by DFID. This document was developed in collaboration between the CSO and UN ESCAP. It is one of five replication studies documenting progress in the development of statistics in Asia.

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Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CDC	City Development Committee
CSO	Central Statistical Organization
CSV	Comma Separated Value
DAO	Development Affairs Organization
DDG	Deputy Director General
DG	Director General
DICA	Directorate of Investment and Company Administration
DISI	Directorate of Industrial Supervision and Inspection Department
EC	Economic Census
GAD	General Administration Department
IDs	Identifications
IRD	Internal Revenue Department
ISIC	International Standard Industrial Classification
JSON	JavaScript Object Notation
MBS	Myanmar Business Survey
MCDC	Mandalay City Development Committee
MIMU	Myanmar Information Management Unit
MOLIP	Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population
MOPF	Ministry of Planning and Finance
MSIC	Myanmar Standard Industrial Classification
MSMEs	Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
NPTDC	Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee
NRC	National Registration Card
NSDS	National Strategy for the Development of Statistics
SBR	Statistical Business Register
SSID	Small Scale Industries Department
UN ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USD	United States Dollar
VPN	Virtual Private Network
YCDC	Yangon City Development Committee

I. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

1. In 2015, the first Myanmar Business Survey (MBS) was conducted by the Central Statistical Organization (CSO) to better understand businesses and industry in Myanmar.¹ A list of all employing businesses in Myanmar is maintained by the Department of Labour, under the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population (MOLIP), which provided the survey frame for the MBS. The MBS was the first step in a plan to develop capacity in conducting economic surveys and establishing an effective economic survey program.

2. There was a major issue with the survey frame used. Almost a quarter (23%) of the units selected were either unable to be located or had ceased activity - a substantially higher loss rate than for similar surveys in other countries. Such loss increases the cost of running surveys and lowers the quality of estimates. There was a clear need to develop a new source for economic surveys.

3. Myanmar has a decentralized statistical system. Business statistics come from a range of different ministries and sources. Many ministries maintain their own list of businesses and business registration processes. Many of these ministries, including the CSO, conduct regular business surveys, but they only represent a small

area or small subset of the Myanmar economy. There was also a clear need to coordinate different survey programs and make them coherent.

4. An effective way to address these data quality issues was to establish a Statistical Business Register (SBR) and have all data producing agencies use it as the source for economic survey frames. An SBR is a database that attempts to maintain a comprehensive list of businesses from administrative and other data sources. It is maintained by a dedicated team in the CSO who collect, clean, process and integrate data sources and provide survey frames to the producers of statistics.

5. Political will and demand for an SBR was clear. In the statistical law passed on the 22nd of January 2018 the CSO was identified as the main statistical authority for Myanmar. They are mandated to organize and collaborate between data producing agencies to deliver coherent data with effective coverage of the economy. Development of an SBR was included in the National Strategy for Development of Statistics (NSDS) – a substantial exercise that involved all stakeholders in the Myanmar statistical system and designated the CSO to develop the SBR.

¹ Myanmar Central Statistical Organization and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Myanmar. 2016. Myanmar Business Survey 2015, Data Report.
https://www.mm.undp.org/content/myanmar/en/home/library/democratic_governance/MyanmarBusinessSurvey.html

6. An economic census (EC) would deliver the highest quality result to tackle data issues and is best practice for the region. This was not a realistic option for the CSO due to a lack of resources. Depending on the methodology chosen, the cost for an economic census in Myanmar could range from twenty to fifty million US dollars.

A. First phase: review of administrative data sources

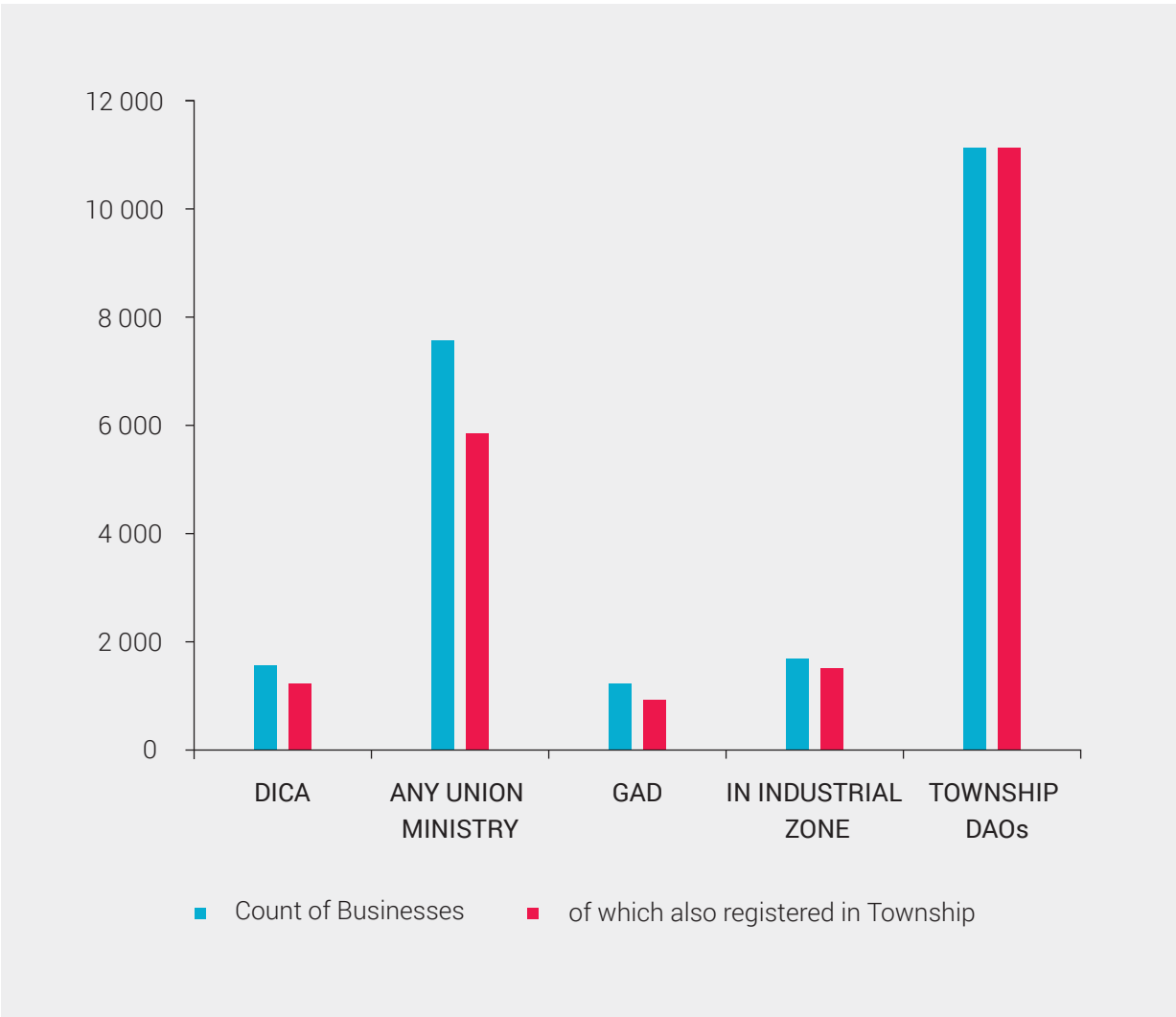
7. The SBR development project started with a review of existing administrative data sources, assessing their suitability as the basis for an SBR. The government authorities responsible for registering and licensing businesses and maintaining a form of business register were:

- The **Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA)** is responsible for registering enterprises. Only larger businesses are required to register at DICA, such as businesses that need to get an export or import license or are above the turnover threshold for tax purposes (subjective to industry, employment and businesses size). Non-compulsory registration is possible, but unlikely due to registration fees. As of February 2019, there were 59,297 businesses registered with DICA using the newly developed Myanmar Companies (MyCo) online platform.
- The **Directorate of Industrial Supervision and Inspection Department (DISI)** is under the Ministry of Industry. Any industrial enterprise using any type of electric power is required to register. This registration source is biased toward the manufacturing sector and does not include many service sector industries.

- **Small-Scale Industries Department (SSID)** as the name reveals, covers only registration of small-scale industries. These are focused on weaving enterprises and handicrafts including ten specific Myanmar traditional arts and crafts.
- The **General Administration Department (GAD)** has a constitutional mandate regarding collecting excise taxes and issuing licenses for things like liquor, beer and yeast. As such, their register is biased towards certain industries.
- The **Internal Revenue Department (IRD)** is the central tax authority of Myanmar. It is responsible for the collection of business income tax and commercial tax (a turnover tax with many exemptions). The data, while highly useful for economic statistics, has fewer units than the DICA registration source and does not capture most Myanmar businesses.

8. **Development Affairs Organization (DAO) / City Development Committee (CDC)**: all business establishments in Myanmar are required to pay an annual business license fee to the local township. These are paid to the local DAO or CDC once a year. The fees are low, the licenses must be on display, and the townships have staff checking and registering businesses that do not have licenses. This was identified as the most promising administrative data source. This was supported by the results from the MBS, which included questions on where businesses were registered.

Figure 1. MBS respondents; where are they registered?



9. Figure 1 shows the count of businesses in the MBS sample (14,331 were sampled out of a population of 167,777) that said they

counting in the SBR. It was decided to focus on building the SBR with the township business licenses, while continuing to investigate other

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