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**Improving Official Statistics by maximizing the use of Administrative Data at
Department of Statistics of Morocco: Current situation and prospects**

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Abstract

Available statistics in the National Statistical System are, mainly, from two types of sources: Those from censuses and surveys and those that can be recovered routine activities of public or private administrations (Administrative Data). This kind of data provides an alternative and under- utilized source of statistical information.

In addition, there is the need to satisfy an increasing demand from users for more and better statistics. Therefore, the exploitation of administrative data for statistical purposes has become more important and necessary for the development and modernization of any national statistical system.

In this regard, the Department of Statistics in Morocco has a long experience of using administrative data in its statistical programs. In addition, this Department has made, since 1970s, many advances in the use of administrative data. However, there are some weaknesses, or difficulties, must be solved when administrative data is used.

Thus, the Department of Statistics in Morocco has made a general upgrading of the statistical information system on several levels, especially by improving the use of administrative data.

Keywords: Administrative Data, Official Statistics, National Statistical System

Introduction

The administrative data sources owned by public institutions set up an important information asset for official statistics. Thus, the use of administrative data in the production of the official statistics has exceedingly increased in the recent years.

In Morocco, Statistics producers are more and more making use of administrative sources for the production of official statistics. Thus, the Department of Statistics in Morocco use administrative data in the production of official statistics for several reasons: reducing the perceived response burden and obtaining efficiency gains by the re-use of data from external sources are often cited as the main arguments for maximising the use of administrative data. And, before administrative data are used in statistics, they typically pass through a number of steps involving human interaction and computation.

I. The processes of production of official statistics in Directorate of Statistics in Morocco

1. Legal and Institutional environment

The Department of Statistics in Morocco is the core of the National Statistical System, insofar as it is the main producer of economic, demographic and social statistical data, in addition to its other missions in national accounts and studies in areas of the applied economics.

The Moroccan statistical system is a decentralized system. Production and dissemination of data are handled primarily by the Department of Statistic and also by other government departments. According to the law, the statistical studies Coordination Committee is responsible for coordinating and promoting this system and the Department of Statistic provides the secretariat.

The Department of Statistic in Morocco has developed cooperative relationships with other departments and public institutions in the field of production and statistical analysis, especially regarding the administrative data. This is among others the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Central Bank (Bank Al Maghreb) of the Exchange Office, the Ministries of Industry, Trade,

Investment and Digital Economy, Agriculture and Marine fisheries, Tourism, Housing and Urban Development, the local authorities and the Directorate General Directorate of national security etc. This cooperation led to the signing of partnership agreements with Bank al-Maghreb, the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Agriculture and Marine fisheries, the People's Central Bank, the exchange Office, the High Commissioner for water and forests, the Court of Cassation, the Moroccan Office of industrial and commercial property as well as the national social security Fund.

2. The processes of production of official statistics

At the Department of Statistics, the collection / the production of statistics is done by using several types of statistical process. These are mainly the following statistical operations:

- Census of Population and Population and Housing (1960, 1971, 1982, 1994, 2004 and 2014);
- Economic Census (2001-2002);
- Population Surveys (Demographic Survey in repeated passes);
- Social Surveys;
- Economic surveys;
- Other types of surveys;
- Regular collection of administrative data from public institutions, semi-public and private.

II. The use of administrative data in Department of Statistics in Morocco

In addition to surveys and censuses, administrative data are a potential source of statistical data. Conducting surveys and censuses is usually very expensive. However, information from administrative records are much less. They cover very diverse areas, they are collected continuously and they allow understanding information for the entire territory. Therefore, they can provide a basis for analysis at very fine levels of geography.

In this regard, the Department of Statistics in Morocco has a long experience of using administrative data in its statistical programs. In addition, this Department has made, since

1970s, many advances in the use of administrative data. However, there are some weaknesses, or difficulties, must be solved when administrative data is used.

1. Exploitation process

Before administrative data are used in statistics, they typically pass through a number of steps involving human interaction and computation. In this regard, monitoring the quality of the administrative data supply that enter the statistical production process, evaluating its possible use for statistical purposes and supporting administrative data acquisition are the mainly tasks that should be performed in the early stages of the production process of administrative data.

2. Strengths

As part of the promotion of administrative statistics, and to meet the increased need for statistical data, the Department of Statistics has undertaken significant efforts to provide users reliable figures, comparable provided within a reasonable time and impartially. They are mainly:

- The expansion of administrative statistics collection field in emerging fields. This is the case of environmental statistics, Information and Communication Technologies and other aspects of socio-economic sectors.
- Strengthening inter-institutional cooperation through the organization of coordination meetings and the enforcement of agreements and partnerships.
- The harmonization of concepts, definitions and classifications used in the field of administrative statistics.
- Continuous improvement of general publications, particularly the Statistical Yearbook of Morocco.

3. Barriers

However, there are some barriers to the wider use of such data for statistical purposes, mainly:

- As data are collected for administrative purposes. Thus, a change in policy can suddenly disrupt or change the registration.

- Administrative reporting can, in many cases, relate to individual rights or obligations (e.g. taxation), whereas individual survey responses are protected by privacy regulations, and have no individual effect.
- Administrations tend to focus on variables that are directly relevant for their administrative function.
- The quality of the metadata can vary from source to source.

4. Perspective

As part of the promotion of these statistics, efforts have to be made to improve the collection in terms of quality, delivery and data transmission regularity. Moreover, a close working relationship with administrative data holders is recommended. Because, it is important to receive information on planned changes that can have an effect on the definitions of variables, coverage or the (timely) provision of the data. Ideally, the Department of Statistics could have much to win from more advanced forms of cooperation, like sharing reports on types of errors found, discussing layout and documentation of administrative forms (or even content of forms) or coordinating basic data checks.

It is also recommended to standardize the transfer of data from administrative data holders to the Department of Statistics, not only because well-organized data transfer procedures can cut out unnecessary intermediate steps, which is important from the viewpoint of timeliness and punctuality, but also because this opens up the possibility for introducing effective administrative data quality management procedures.

Conclusion

The Department of Statistics in Morocco is increasingly making use of administrative and other secondary data sources for the production of statistics. This makes it highly dependent on the quality of those sources. Therefore, efforts are needed to ensure the quality of these data. Moreover, it is essential to have quality statistics to make effective and sound policy decisions.

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