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session 5 : Using SBR to produce business statistics

Overview of the SBR in Japan
and efforts for enhancing the business statistics using the SBR in the interim years

Abstract

The main source of the Statistical Business Register in Japan (JSBR) is questionnaire information from the Economic Census for Business Activity (EC-BA), the Economic Census for Business Frame (EC-BF), the Annual Business Survey (ABS) and the Establishment / Enterprise Inquiry (EEI). EC-BA, EC-BF and ABS is fundamental statistical survey based on the Statistics Act in Japan.

EC-BA covers all enterprises and establishments, comprehensively identifies annual sales and costs, etc., by industry, and is conducted every five years (base year).

EC-BF covers enterprises and establishments, identifies the basic structure such as industry and number of employees, and is conducted once every five years, in the interim years of EC-BA.

ABS extracts enterprises that are within the range of achieving 80% of total sales and is conducted every year in the interim years of EC-BA. For the top 5,000 enterprises that have the significant impact on economic statistics, we conduct the Profiling Activity that is the support for respondents to alleviate the burden on those responding.

EEI targets the newly started or closed enterprises and establishments to check the status of business activities by using the clue of the administrative data. And the new EEI, conducted from 2023, targets the existing enterprises having multiple establishments.

The JSBR we have developed is provided every year as an "annual frame" and is used by governments and prefectures to conduct surveys and produce statistics. In the latest 2023 annual frame, the number of enterprises is approximately 3.7 million, and the number of private establishments is approximately 6 million.

By utilizing the annual frame, we are currently making efforts to provide result tables that link chronologically with the aggregated values of the EC-BA in the interim year. This leads to conducting time-series analysis by industry, region, etc., on the same level as the EC-BA.

Keywords: Using SBR, Economic Statistics, Coverage, Update Frequency

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Session 8: Using SBR to produce business statistics

**Overview of the SBR in Japan
and efforts for enhancing the business statistics using the SBR in the interim years**

1. Introduction

The Statistical Business Register in Japan (JSBR) is information infrastructure that plays an important role for conducting statistical surveys on establishments and enterprises. It is maintained by the Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications under Article 27, Paragraph 1 of the Statistics Act (Act No.53 of 2007) for the purpose of contributing to the "accurate and efficient production of statistics" and the "reduction of the burden on respondents to statistical surveys."

The main data source of the JSBR is information from the responses of the fundamental statistical surveys: Economic Census for Business Activity (EC-BA), Economic Census for Business Frame (EC-BF), and Annual Business Survey (ABS), as well as Establishment/Enterprise Inquiries (EEI).
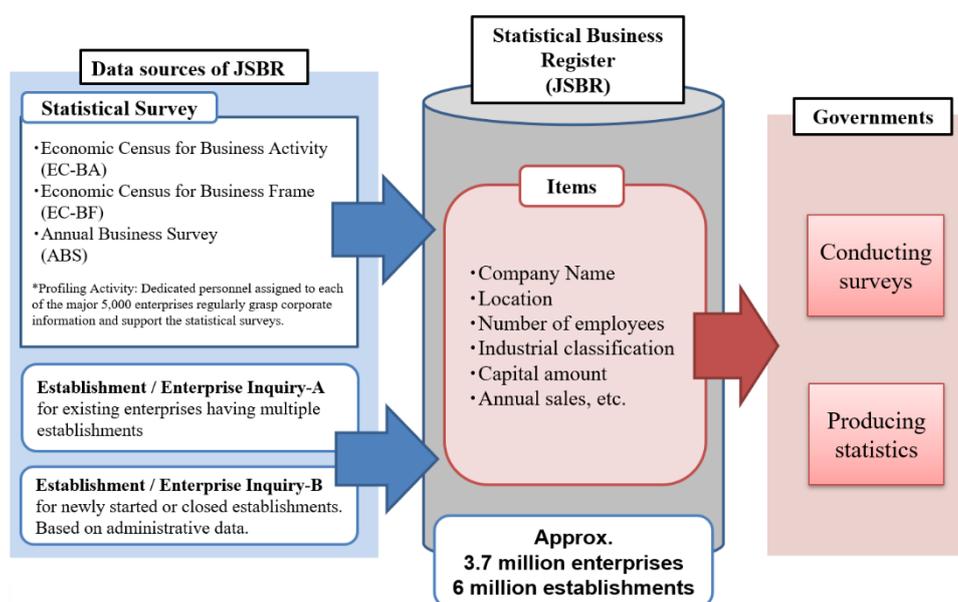
The JSBR includes information used to distribute survey documents, such as "company names" and "locations", and basic information used in sample design of statistical surveys, such as "number of employees", "industrial classification", "capital amount", or "annual sales."

The maintained JSBR is provided every year as an "annual frame" for use by ministries, prefectures, etc. to conduct surveys and produce statistics. Note that, in the latest 2023 annual frame, the overall number of privately owned establishments was approximately 6 million, and the number of enterprises was approximately 3.7 million (Figure 1).

Currently, we are looking into using this annual frame to produce statistics in the interim years, which have the same coverage and the same detailed tables with EC-BA. This will result in providing users with the time-series-connected statistics to EC-BA even in the interim years.

Figure 1: Concept of the JSBR

2. Data sources of the JSBR

The main data source of the JSBR is information from the responses of the fundamental statistical surveys: EC-BA, EC-BF, and ABS, as well as EEI.

EC-BA is a fundamental statistical survey conducted once every five years (base years). The census purpose is to comprehensively grasp accounting items such as sales amounts and expenses of all industries, identify the economic activities of businesses on a national and regional level, and maintain the JSBR. It can produce detailed statistical tables and serve as important input data for the Input-Output Table. In addition, it is used for various policy makings. There are three response methods: by enumerator, by direct mailing and online.

EC-BF is a fundamental statistical survey conducted once every five years (interim years other than EC-BA). The census purpose is to identify the basic structure of activities, for example, industries or numbers of employees, on a national and regional level, and maintain the JSBR. The census target is all enterprises/establishments except for unincorporated enterprises without employees. This is to ensure cost effectiveness and reduce the burden on respondents to statistical surveys, and the excluded enterprises account for only about 0.4% of total sales in the population. In addition, the survey is also intended to prepare the population for EC-BA to be conducted two years later. In the past, there were three response methods: by enumerator, by direct mailing and online. However, since 2024, the census has been conducted using two response methods (direct mailing and online) to reduce the burden on local governments and statistical enumerators.

ABS is a fundamental statistical survey conducted every year (interim years other than EC-BA). The survey purpose is to identify the structure of all industries, such as their added value, and contribute to improving the precision of the National Accounts Statistics. The survey target is the enterprises determined by a purposive sampling of enterprises that fall within the top 80% of total sales. As a result, we can conduct the survey and produce statistics efficiently every year. There are two response methods: by direct mailing and online.

For the top approximately 5,000 enterprises, which have a large impact on economic statistics, a Profiling Activity program provides support for respondents in order to grasp mergers, divestitures, etc., on a regular basis and reduce the burden on respondents to statistical surveys. The Profiling Activity program plays a key role in the production of highly accurate fundamental statistics and the improvement of the accuracy of the JSBR.

EEI is not a fundamental statistical survey, but conducted under Article 27, Paragraph 1 of the Statistics Act. The inquiry purpose is to maintain the JSBR. The Establishment/Enterprise Inquiry-A (EEI-A) covers existing enterprises having multiple establishments to grasp information of enterprise and establishment under their control. The EEI-A has been conducted since 2023. The Establishment/Enterprise Inquiry-B (EEI-B) covers newly started or closed establishments as indicated in administrative data ("Labor Insurance Data" and "Commercial and Corporate Registration"). The EEI-B is conducted to check the status of business activities of establishments and enterprises.

3. Development of the JSBR

The JSBR began operating in 2013 on the basis of the 2009 EC-BF and the 2012 EC-BA.

In 2013, The National Tax Agency published the "Corporate Number" on the Corporate Number Publication Site together with the name of the corporation and the location of the head office or principal office. The corporations listed on the Corporate Number Publication Site were collated with the JSBR by name and location, and those not collated were further collated with the notification status of the Corporate Number (postal mail delivery status). As a result, approximately 1.6 million corporations that had not been included in the JSBR were added to the survey population, and the 2019 EC-BF was conducted on the basis of this. The results of these collations were registered in the JSBR, significantly broadening its coverage.

In 2019, the ABS started by an integration of three statistical surveys: the Survey on Service Industries, the Census of Commerce, and the Survey of Selected Service Industries. The reason was an increased need to understand the economic structure across industries at the same point in time in the interim years. With the ABS, changes in the annual economic structure can now be captured even in the interim years.

In 2022, the ABS covered additionally enterprises of the industries "agriculture, forestry, and fisheries", "mining and quarrying", and "construction" to further improve and achieve much better comparability with the EC-BA. As a result, the ABS now covers all industries.

In 2023, the EEI-A for existing enterprises having multiple establishments started. As a result, it became possible to update the basic information about the enterprises and establishments covered 90% of total sales with the combination of the ABS and the EEI-A. This further improved the coverage and frequency of updates to the JSBR in the interim years.

Through these efforts, it is now possible to provide the JSBR with fresh population information every year (Figure 2).

Figure 3 shows the coverage and cycle of the surveys from the most recent 2021 EC-BA to the next 2026 EC-BA after these efforts.
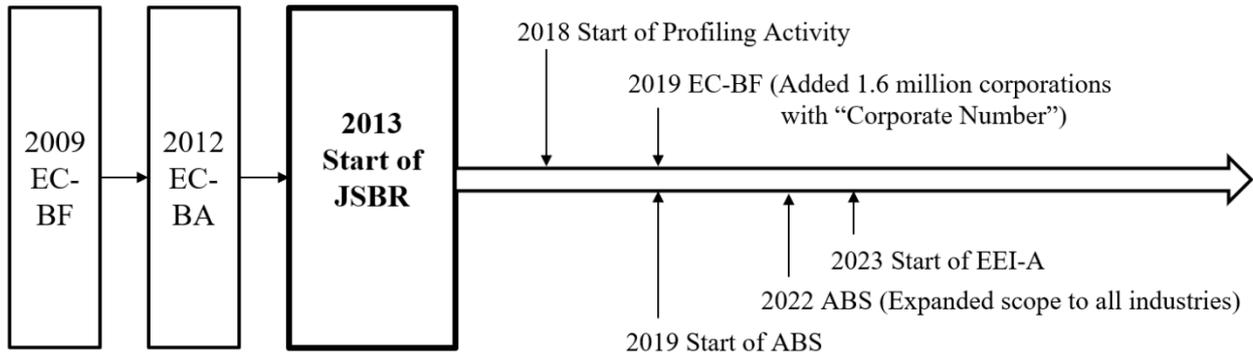
Figure 2: Progress of the JSBR

Figure 3: Survey coverages and cycles

Classification		Percentage of total sales	2021 [Result]		2022 [Result]		2023 [Result]		2024 [Result]		2025 [Ongoing]		2026 [Plan]	
			Enterprise	Establishment	Enterprise	Establishment	Enterprise	Establishment	Enterprise	Establishment	Enterprise	Establishment	Enterprise	Establishment
Corporations	having multiple establishments (Profiling Activity)	50%	EC-BA	EC-BA	ABS	ABS	ABS	ABS	ABS	ABS	ABS	ABS	EC-BA	EC-BA
	having multiple establishments	30%	EC-BA	EC-BA	ABS		ABS	EEI-A	ABS	EC-BF	ABS	EEI-A	EC-BA	EC-BA
		10%	EC-BA	EC-BA			EEI-A	EEI-A	EC-BF	EC-BF	EEI-A	EEI-A	EC-BA	EC-BA
	having single establishment	8%	EC-BA	EC-BA					EC-BF	EC-BF			EC-BA	EC-BA
Unincorporated enterprises	with employees	1.6%	EC-BA	EC-BA					EC-BF				EC-BA	EC-BA
	without employees	0.4%	EC-BA	EC-BA									EC-BA	EC-BA
Newly started/closed		—	EC-BA	EC-BA	EEI-B	EEI-B	EEI-B	EEI-B	EC-BF	EC-BF	EEI-B	EEI-B	EC-BA	EC-BA

*Percentage of total sales "30%" include "having single establishment" which is top of sales

Legend: EC-BA, EC-BF, ABS, EEI-A, EEI-B

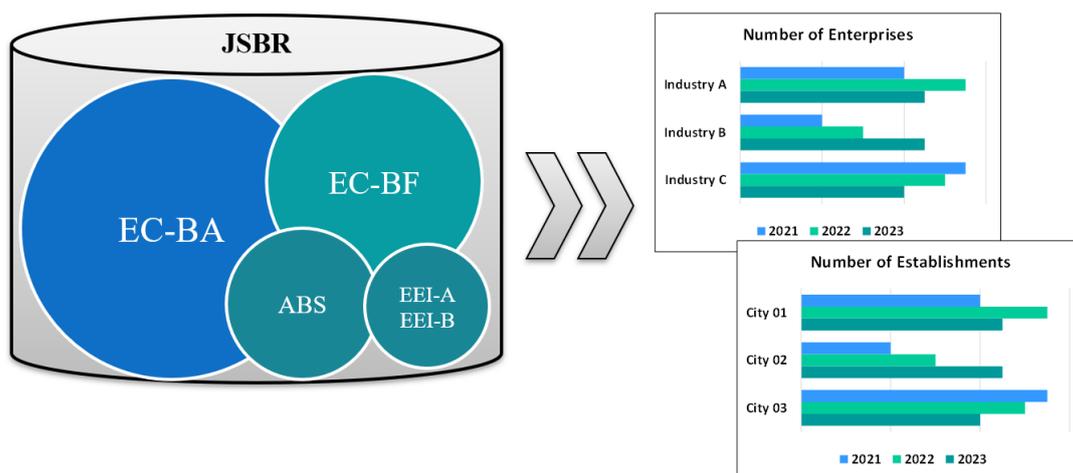## 4. Business statistics using the JSBR in the interim years

The JSBR maintained in this manner is provided every year as an "annual frame" for use by ministries, prefectures, etc. to conduct surveys and produce statistics. In the latest 2023 annual frame, the overall number of privately owned establishments was approximately 6 million, and the number of enterprises was approximately 3.7 million.

Meanwhile, the ABS, which is conducted in the interim years, does not cover some industries (political organizations, cultural organizations, religion, etc.) and newly started or closed establishments, because its purpose is to identify the structure of all industries, such as their added value, and contribute to improving the precision of the National Accounts Statistics. For this reason, it is not possible for ABS to produce the statistics with the same coverage and the same detailed tables with EC-BA in the interim years, and this is a problem.

Therefore, for the scope not covered by the ABS, we are trying to utilize the latest annual frames (i.e., the latest results obtained from the EC-BA, EC-BF and EEI-A/B) to produce enhanced business statistics (Figure 4). Our goal is to produce statistics in the interim years, which have the same coverage and the same detailed tables with EC-BA. This will result in providing users with the time-series-connected statistics to EC-BA even in the interim years.

Figure 4: Image of the JSBR aggregation

The challenge at present is that not all closed establishments and enterprises are being captured. As indicated in section 2, the JSBR in the interim years uses administrative data ("Labor Insurance Data" and "Commercial and Corporate Registration") to catch information on closed establishments. However, due to factors such as the lack of enforcement of business closure registration, the number of reported closures is lower than the actual number of closures, and we know that the number of closed establishments in the JSBR, which is based on this, is also too low. For this reason, we are currently examining whether it is possible to utilize information other than the administrative data ("Labor Insurance Data" and "Commercial and Corporate Registration").

5. Future plans and summary

The results of ABS are released on a regular basis every year (interim years other than EC-BA). The results of the 2024 ABS (1st and 2nd Tabulation) were released in March and August 2025. The results of the 2024 ABS (3rd and 4th Tabulation) will be released between October and December 2025. In addition, the results of the 2024 EC-BF (Preliminary) were released in May 2025. The results of the 2024 EC-BF (Final) will be released in December 2025.

In this way, the results each statistical survey are regularly released and available to the public even in interim years. We will continue to examine how we can incorporate the business statistics in the interim years, which utilize annual frames, as described in section 4, into regular publication cycles, and we will also continue to work on developing the JSBR.