

# ASSESSMENT OF THE RESPONDENTS' BURDEN (2006)

## 1. Introduction

In the conditions of the going on transition in the country, some problems concerning the activity of the National Statistical Institute (NSI) emerged. One of them is a problem of statistical data collecting. The private enterprises are not always ready to cooperate and some of them consider the provision of statistical information almost as a 'breach' of company confidentiality and therefore refuse to participate in the carried out statistical surveys. Others (mainly from the sector of micro and small-sized enterprises) refuse to participate because of the lack of personnel to deal with the filling in of statistical forms, questionnaires and report forms.

As a result of the occurred changes, over the last few years NSI has focused on dealing with the problem of the respondents' burden and improving the mutual relations with the respondents. The Law on Statistics was amended and improved, which provide the necessary guarantees for the protection of confidentiality of the information, submitted by the respondents. The needs of the government for information and Bulgaria's commitments to a number of international institutions require a considerable volume of varied statistical information. At the same time NSI will do everything possible to ensure that the process of gathering of primary information is accompanied by the least possible burden of respondents.

## 2. Measuring of the respondents' burden

Statistical information is received from NSI respondents (mainly enterprises and households) by means of filling in of statistical forms, questionnaires and other report forms. In order to prepare and provide this information the respondents spend time and resources and therefore it is important the respondent's burden to be assessed and possible ways to reduce it to be found out. The respondents' burden is determined by the time spent by respondents for filling in a statistical form, questionnaire or report form, multiplied by the number of forms, questionnaires or reports, filled in over a specific period. The time needed for filling in the form (respectively the questionnaire or the report form) includes the time needed for preparing the data in accordance with the methodology of the survey and the instructions for filling in the form (respectively the questionnaire, the report form). The main aim is to monitor the burden of respondents over the years.

The units of survey are various categories of respondents: state-owned enterprises, municipal and private companies, large, small and micro-sized enterprises as well as selected households or their members.

Another conceptual issue connected to measuring the burden of respondents is whether this burden should be calculated on the basis of questionnaires filled in and sent by respondents to the statistical institution or should also include questionnaires, which were supposed to be filled in by all respondents (enterprises), but were not filled in by all of them. This difference is defined as a difference between gross and net burden.

### 3. Current assessment of the respondents' burden in filling in specific forms and questionnaires in 2006

In order to assess the burden of respondents, a question on the time needed for filling in the form was included in statistical form. The question is formulated as follows: "Please, indicate the time needed to fill in the form, respectively the questionnaire or report form (in minutes) ...". The forms by periodicity are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

#### Information on the time spent in filling in statistical forms of the survey in 2006 by periodicity

Indicators	Periodicity of the survey				Total
	Monthly	Quarterly	Yearly	Other	
Number of statistical forms with a question on the time needed for filling in	1	22	39	5	67
Number of statistical forms containing information about the time spent in filling in	1	22	39	5	67
Average time spent* for filling in statistical forms <b>in minutes</b>	350	268	168	37	206

\* Time spent is calculated as a non-weighted average arithmetic mean on the basis of statistical forms containing information on the time needed for filling in forms

According to the above information, the average time spent for filling in one form with yearly periodicity is 168 minutes, with quarterly periodicity – 268, with monthly periodicity – 350 and with other periodicity – 37 minutes. In Annex 1 and Annex 2 are presented the maximum, average and minimum time, necessary for filling in every one of 67 forms and the number of respondents of every form as well as the number of respondents participating in surveys (enterprises, persons and households). The differences in the time needed for filling in one and the same form by different respondents are due to the following reasons: size and kind of the economic activity, structure of the enterprises, various degree of availability of computers and software for processing the needed information, various degree of filling in the indicators of the respective form (some firms fill in insignificant part of indicators), different qualification of personnel filling in statistical forms etc.

#### 4. Some conclusions

- The current assessment of the respondents' burden in 2006 is made for limited number of filled in forms – 67.
- The predominant part of forms is with yearly periodicity (58.2%), followed by these with quarterly periodicity – 32.8%.
- The yearly electronic forms "UE – Higher education – universities and specialized high schools" and "UE - Higher education – colleges" require the most time for filling in. The maximum time spent for their filling in is respectively 195 and 150

hours. The maximum time for filling in the electronic form “Municipal waste” – over 140 hours is reported by the respondents.

- The minimum time for filling in the above-mentioned forms is over 60 times less than the maximum time due to the fact, that there is a big difference between 50 universities and high schools filled in the forms. Some of them are small units and they fill in limited number of indicators. The time needed for data preparing and filling the forms is many times less than the time needed by the large universities.
- The filling in electronic forms (questionnaires) takes more time than the conventional paper forms (questionnaires) and the development and support of the software requires financial resources.
- The average time needed for filling in the 67 forms is 157 545 hours or 19 693 persons/days per year.
- The total average time needed for filling in the statistical forms could be considerably reduced if the methodology will be improved at least for the most burdensome and labour-consuming statistical surveys.
- Decrease of the necessary time for filling in the forms will be realized by improvement of the co-ordination between divisions and departments and eliminating the double reporting of the indicators, sections of the forms or accountancies.
- The average time needed for filling in the statistical forms of the carried out surveys in 2006, for which there are such an information, including about the survey on households budgets is 62 889 hours or 7 799 persons/days.
- The maximum time for filling in the forms many times exceeds the average needed time. The reason is that the respondents (enterprises) are with different kind of economic activity and form of ownership, size and structure, various degree of availability of computers and software for processing the needed information, different qualification of personnel filling in statistical forms etc.
- The biggest part of forms (20) containing information about the time spent in filling them in are provided by Statistics of social activities division, followed by Statistics of agriculture division (17), Statistics of transport division (15) and Statistics of environment division – 11 forms, containing information about the time spent in filling in.
- The information received from one division only from Business statistics department is quite scanty.

The efforts to reduce the respondents’ burden should be oriented towards simplifying and reducing the content of the forms and other statistical tools for data collecting as well as improvement of the methodology of surveys, carrying out of surveys with smaller populations of the observed units in sample surveys, lengthening the interval between surveys as well as dropping out of surveys with low public interest. It is necessary the search for alternative information (including use of administrative sources) to be widen. The administrative registers are built up for quite different purposes and additional work is necessary the registers to be used correctly for statistical surveys.

## **ANNEX 1**

### **Information on the time spent in filling in statistical forms in 2005/2006**

Identifi- cation code of statistical form	Name of the form	Periodici- ty of the survey	Number of surveyed units	Maximum time for filling in one form in minutes	Average time for filling in one form in minutes	Minimum time for filling in one form in minutes
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
KI 03030	KI-Libraries “Report on activity of the libraries with library fund over 2 thousands number”	Yearly	4552	480	138	15
KI 03060	KI-Museums “Report on activity of the museums”	Yearly	229	480	106	5
KI 03010	KI-Theaters “Report on activity of theaters, operas, circuses, and musical formations”	Yearly	137	480	80	10
KI 03070	KI-Community clubs “Report on activity of the community clubs”	Yearly	2838	520	120	45
UE 03010	UE-electronic form “Students in advanced research programmes”	Yearly	118	1920	438	60
UE 03020	UE-Kindergartens	Yearly	3775	240	20	3
UE 03030	UE-Education-1	Yearly	4383	8940	360	60
UE 03040	UE-electronic form “Higher education – universities and specialized high schools	Yearly	50	11700	2417	180
UE 03040	UE-electronic form “Higher education – colleges”	Yearly	50	9000	1430	60
UE 03050	UE-Establishments for upbringing abandoned children	Yearly	102	130	45	5
UE 03060	UE-electronic form “Post-secondary education against payment for acquisition a vocational qualification degree”	Yearly	176	175	72	5
Z 03010	Report on the numbers of beds and medical personnel in 2005	Yearly	3020	960	35	5
Z 03020	Report on the activities and specialized institutions providing social services in 2005	Yearly	468	1200	180	10
Z 03080	Report on the establishments for medical and social care for children in 2005	Yearly	32	600	175	30
Z 03070	Report on the crèches/daily and weekly/ in 2005	Yearly	641	180	35	5
UU 02022	Card for residential buildings	Quarterly	300	370	42	3
UT 03012	Report on accommodation establishments	Quarterly	2282	480	54	10
UT 03030	Report on the rest houses and activities – 2005	Yearly	350	48	48	6
UP 99020	Report on the activity of local commissions for struggle against anti-social behaviour of underage and minor persons	Yearly	296	800	290.5	120
UP 99018	Card for accused person and suspect	Quarterly	147	10	6	3
UU 01045	Structure and total number of the personnel in district administration	Yearly	28	218	199	175
UU 01015	Structure and total number of the personnel in municipality administration	Yearly	264	479	350	228
UU 01025	Structure and total number of the municipality council	Yearly	264	308	258	136
UU 01035	Structure and total number of the personnel in the city council	Yearly	2628	309	212	144
EE 08010	Expenditure on protection and restoration of environment	Yearly	801	1440	49	<sup>4</sup> 10

Identifi- cation code of statistical form	Name of the form	Periodicity of the survey	Number of surveyed units	Maximum time for filling in one form in minutes	Average time for filling in one form in minutes	Minimum time for filling in one form in minutes
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
EE 08040	Movement of tangible fixed assets designed for environment	Yearly	910	960	46	5
EE 08010	Revenues from taxes and fees and expenditure on municipal waste	Yearly	264	840	62	5
OS 03040	Municipal waste	Yearly	221	9600	210	5
OS 03120	Report on the waste in agriculture, forestry and fishing in 2005	Yearly	722	1300	82	5
EE 08020	OOS-Water consumption	Yearly	2457	1440	50	1
EE 08050	OOS-Water consumption-HPP	Yearly	117	480	39	1
OS 03080	OOS-Water supply (HM)	Yearly	47	1500	123	20
OS 03030	Control carried out to avoid the pollution of sea waters and the Danube River	Yearly	13	60	47	5
OS 03090	OOS-Water supply (W&S)	Yearly	71	4800	478	2
EE 08030	Report on the sources of emissions into atmosphere in 2005	Yearly	4485	2280	74	1
SS 03060	Report on draught and sales of freshwater species fish and animals, incl. geo-fund in the domestic market in 2005	Yearly	173	480	52	5
SS 03070	Report on draught and sales of Black Sea and ocean fish, salt-water animals and products of them in the domestic market in 2005	Yearly	17	75	49	5
SS 03032	Report on production and sales of products from forestry, logging and services connected with them in II quarter of 2006	Quarterly	640	480	58	5
SS 00030	Annual report of enterprises, carrying out forestry activity in 2005	Yearly	764	480	70	5
SS 04012	Revenues and expenditure of the agriculture enterprises	Quarterly	2500	600	58.75	5
SS 00010	Annual report of the agricultural enterprises	Yearly	3036	980	166	10
EE 03102	Form EE-Purchased vegetal products	Quarterly	350	130	17	5
EE 0312	Form EE-Purchased animal products	Quarterly	250	120	26	5
EE 06072	Form EE-Prices of preparations for vegetal protection	Quarterly	328	150	29	5
EE 06082	Form EE-Prices of veterinary medical products	Quarterly	285	210	25	5
EE 06092	Form EE-Prices of sowing and					

	planting material	Quarterly	390	65	20	5
Identifi- cation code of statistical form	Name of the form	Periodicity of the survey	Number of surveyed units	Maximum time for filling in one form in minutes	Average time for filling in one form in minutes	Minimum time for filling in one form in minutes
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
EE 06129	Form EE-Prices of veterinary medical products	Single	285	260	45	15
EE 06119	Form EE-Prices of sowing and planting material	Single	390	120	35	15
SS 06029	SS-Producer prices	Single	546	300	50	15
SS 06011	Form SS-Producer prices	Quarterly	1305	260	18	5
EE 06013	Form EE-Prices of mineral fertilizers	Quarterly	201	65	14	5
EE 06023	Form EE-Prices of fodder	Quarterly	185	180	23	5
Tr 03011	TR-Railway transport	Monthly	1	400	350	300
Tr 03042	TR-Railway transport	Quarterly	1	2400	2400	2400
Tr 02040	TR-Rolling stock	Yearly	1	120	120	120
Tr 03032	TR-Bus transportation	Quarterly	331	960	480	240
Tr 03052	TR-Maritime transport	Quarterly	5	1920	404	5
Tr 03062	TR-Inland waterway transport	Quarterly	14	320	100	20
Tr 03112	TR-Electric transport	Quarterly	17	590	230	60
	Underground		1	120	120	120
	Trams		1	120	120	120
	Trolleybuses		15	620	243	20
Tr 03146	TR-Freight automobile transport	Weekly	18855	240	150	60
Tr 02012	TR-Pipeline transport - 1 (petroleum)	Quarterly	2	120	120	120
Tr 02022	TR-Pipeline transport - 2 (gas)	Quarterly	1	600	600	600
SB 03012	S-Posts	Quarterly	1	240	240	240
SB 03033	Courier services	Yearly	20	480	145	20
SB 03022	S-Telecommunications	Quarterly	1	60	60	60
SB 02020	S-Development (telecommunications) 1	Yearly	1	60	60	60
SB 02010	S-Development 2 (posts)	Yearly	1	240	240	240

## ANNEX 2

## INFORMATION ON THE TIME SPENT FOR FILLING IN THE QUESTIONNAIRES OF THE SURVEYS IN 2006

Name of the questionnaires of survey	Number of surveyed units	Maximum time for filling in the questionnaire in minutes	Average time for filling in the questionnaire in minutes	Minimum time for filling in the questionnaire in minutes
1	2	3	4	5
Survey on the income in sector "Households" in Agriculture" in 2005	1432	68	33	16
Economic accounts in Agriculture – time for filling in the form for one quarter	1944	360	62	20
Labour force survey – II quarter of 2006	353	60	14.8	1
Module "Transition from employment to retirement" – II quarter of 2006 (Labour force survey)	9564	42	9.8	1
Economic accounts in Agriculture – time for filling in the form for one quarter	1745	360	69	10
Households budgets survey	3000	60 minutes for one beat or 120 minutes for two beats per month	40 minutes for one beat or 80 minutes for two beats per month	20 minutes for one beat or 40 minutes for two beats per month
Survey of the professional education of the employed persons in the enterprises in 2005	2788	960	60	5