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More to be covered under new census



More areas will be covered under this year's census, said economy minister Rafizi Ramli. (Bernama pic)

KUALA LUMPUR: This year's economic census will be expanded to cover an additional five sectors, according to economy minister Rafizi Ramli.

Apart from the wholesale and retail sectors, agriculture, manufacturing, construction, mining and quarrying as well as services will now be included.

The expanded coverage will also see the inclusion of data on items such as e-sport, electric vehicles (EVs) and unmanned aircraft systems, or drones, Rafizi said at the launching of the 2023 economic census by the statistics department (DoSM) here today.

Rafizi said a newly set up national statistics data council will be given the task of strengthening the process of gathering and using statistics. The council will be chaired by Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim.

The objective is to use the data to assess the country's achievements under the 12th Malaysia Plan.

Moving forward, the DoSM will continue to serve as the central agency for statistical services. Over and above that, every ministry and government agency will have to appoint a chief data officer and a national public data analytics centre will be set up.

Rafizi said the improvement was necessary to enable the Malaysian statistical system to cope with the complexity of an increasingly dynamic economic environment and to meet the challenges of the present and the future.

One of the proposals on the table is to amend the Statistics Act 1965 to strengthen the DoSM.

Chief Statistician Uzir Mahidin said future census would be able to provide key economic data down to the district level.

"This can help the federal and state governments to make effective strategic plans as well as to provide the data that can be used to create new benchmarks for the gross domestic product (GDP) and other indices."

In another development, the DoSM said it has revised its online questionnaire, known as e-BE, to meet the needs of current economic conditions, technological changes and dynamics as well as an increasingly challenging environment.

The economic census is conducted once in five years, and the 2023 edition will be the fifth in the series.

The last census was conducted in 2016 but the Covid-19 pandemic made it impossible to conduct the one scheduled for 2021.

Under Section 5 of the Statistics Act, every organisation with operations in Malaysia is required to provide actual information or the best estimate to DoSM.

Uzir estimated that 1.2 million organisations will be covered in this year's census.

"Preliminary data from DoSM shows that micro-organisations will make up 75.2% of all groups to be covered," he said.

"The others are small organisations (20.5%), medium organisations (1.6%) and large organisations (2.7%)."

The census starts in April and ends in September.

“Data is important for us to make decisions based on evidence or facts. It helps us make plans based on a strategic approach so we can optimise scarce resources,” Rafizi added.