

## The “Betrieb” in surveys Collecting data from the “right” unit?

Workshop: The “Betrieb” as corporate actor – a theoretical and empirical challenge  
Helmut Schmidt University Hamburg, 29-30 April 2021

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Statistics Netherlands and University of Ljubljana (Slovenia)  
30 April 2021

# The “Betrieb” in surveys

## Collecting data from the “right” unit

The business as actor in surveys:

1. The (business) survey process
2. Defining the “right” unit
3. Getting data from the “right” unit

Relevant for:

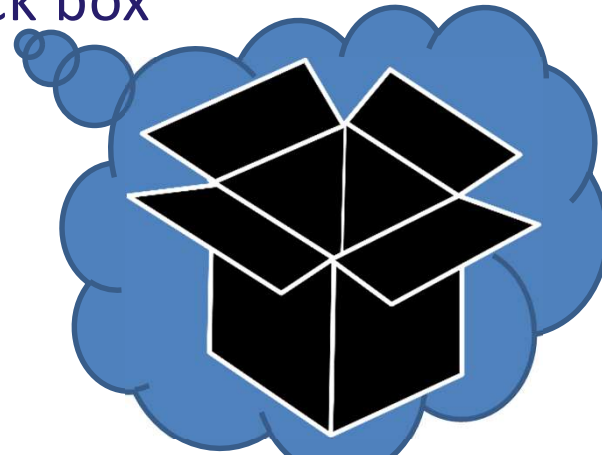
- Quantitative research (surveys)
- Qualitative research
- Research in marketing, accounting, HR etc.



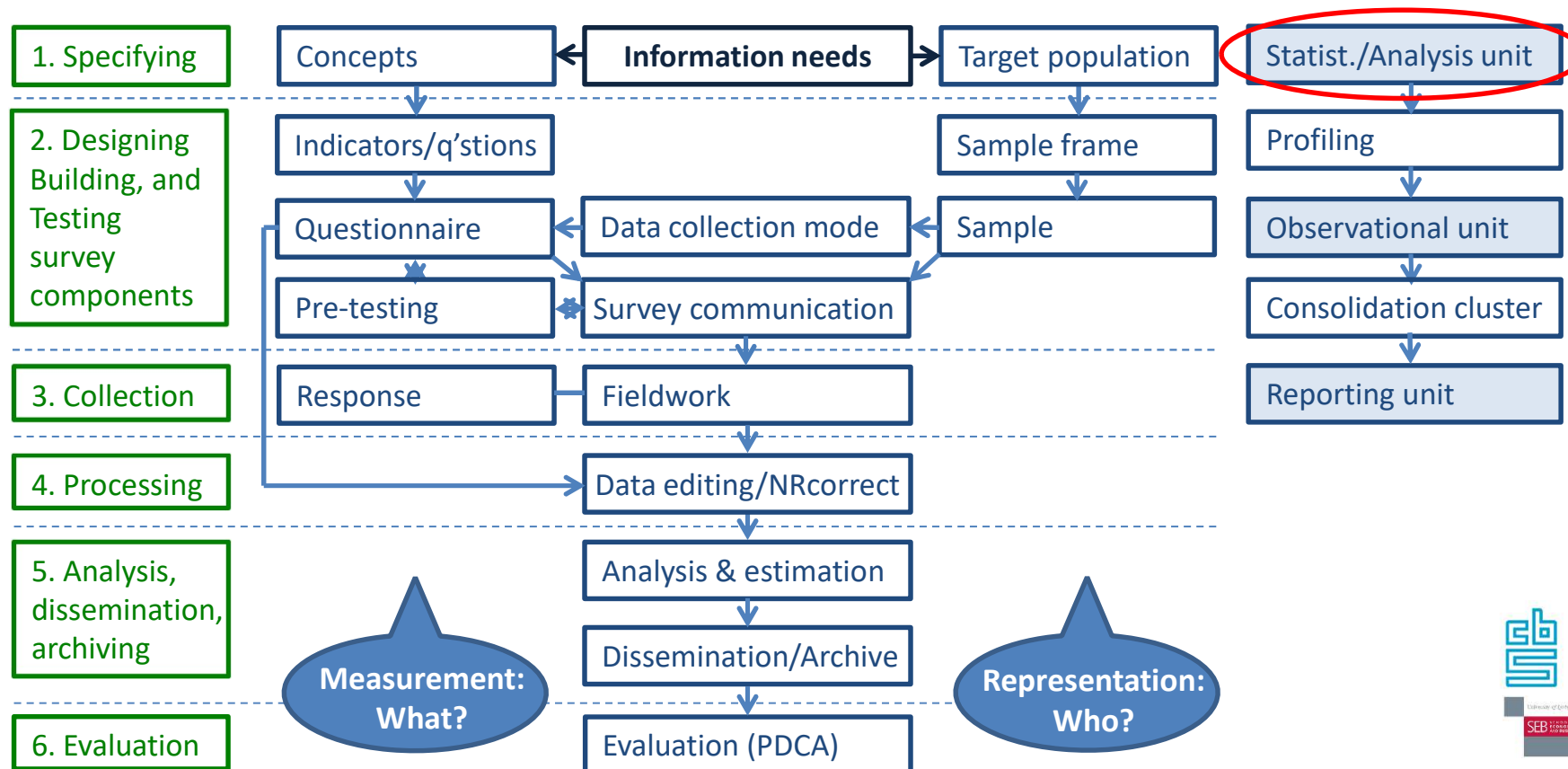
## Core statement

The business is not one entity; it is a system of (sub)units, and people at several levels.

- From the outside: the legal structure
  - Difference between analysis, observational, and reporting unit
- From the inside: Opening the black box
  - The internal response process
  - The internal decision-making process, and how we can influence this process
  - Advancing ideas regarding a theory on organisational survey participation



# The survey process map



# Case: production of cement

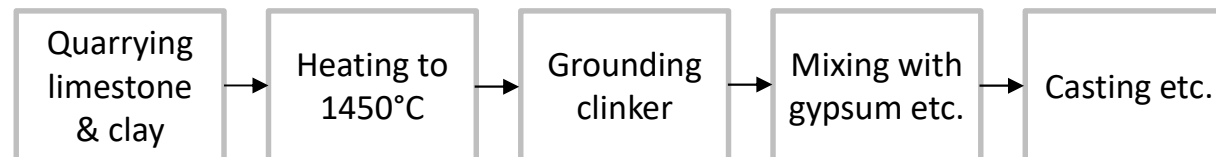


PODATKI O

Serijska matična knjiga	Ime in kraj podjetja črnska, intenzivna	Datum ustanovitve zapisnice	Datum prenehanja zapisnice
5967	SALONIT ANNOVO	29. 5. 1979	2. 12. 1979
4697	SALONIT ANNOVO	18. 2. 1981	31. 8. 2006
4697	SALONIT INVEST, d.o.o.	1. 9. 2006	31. 12. 2013
81015	SALONIT ANNOVO proizvajal materialov, d.o.o.	1. 1. 2014	13. 8. 2020

INPUT:

limestone & clay      energy

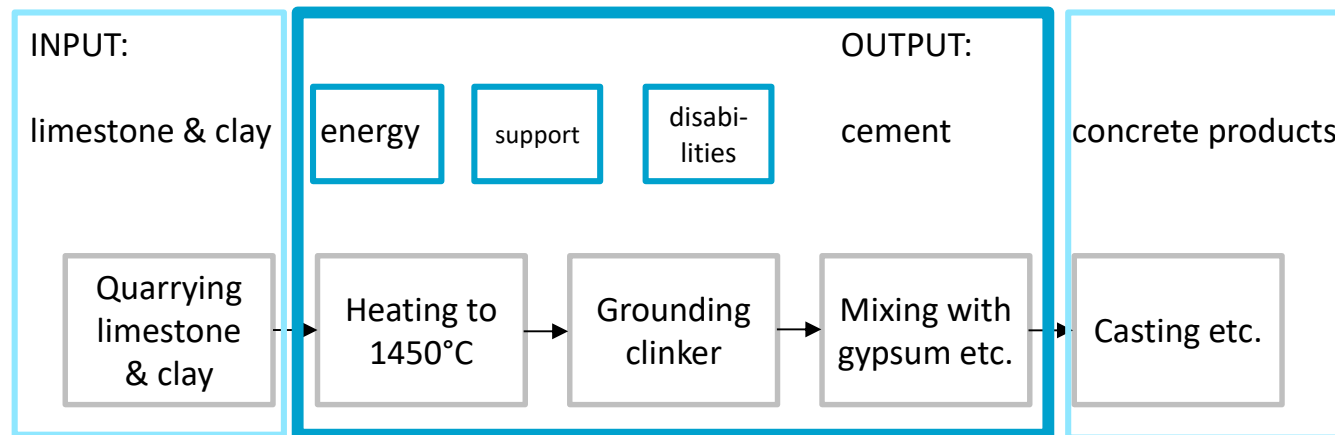


OUTPUT:

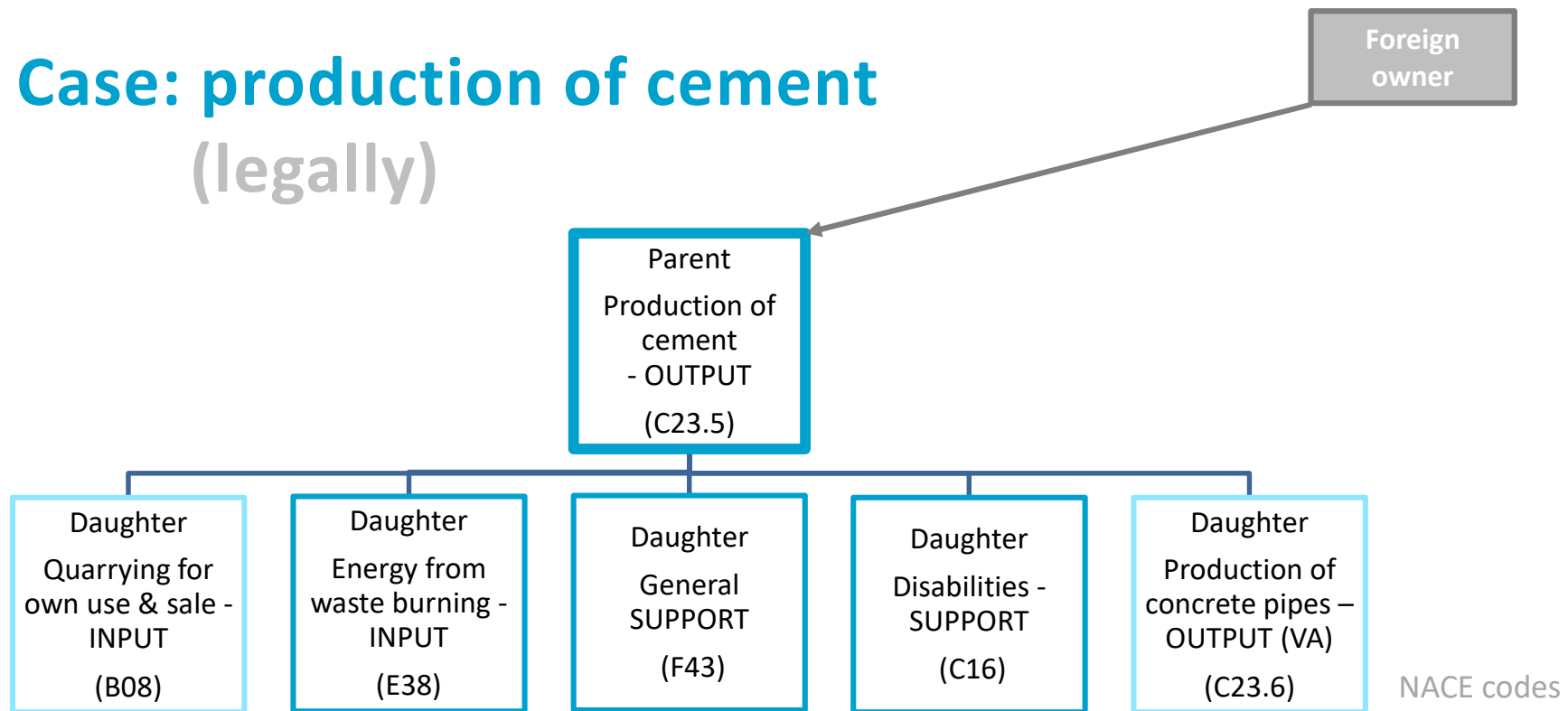
cement      concrete products



## Case: production of cement (simplified)



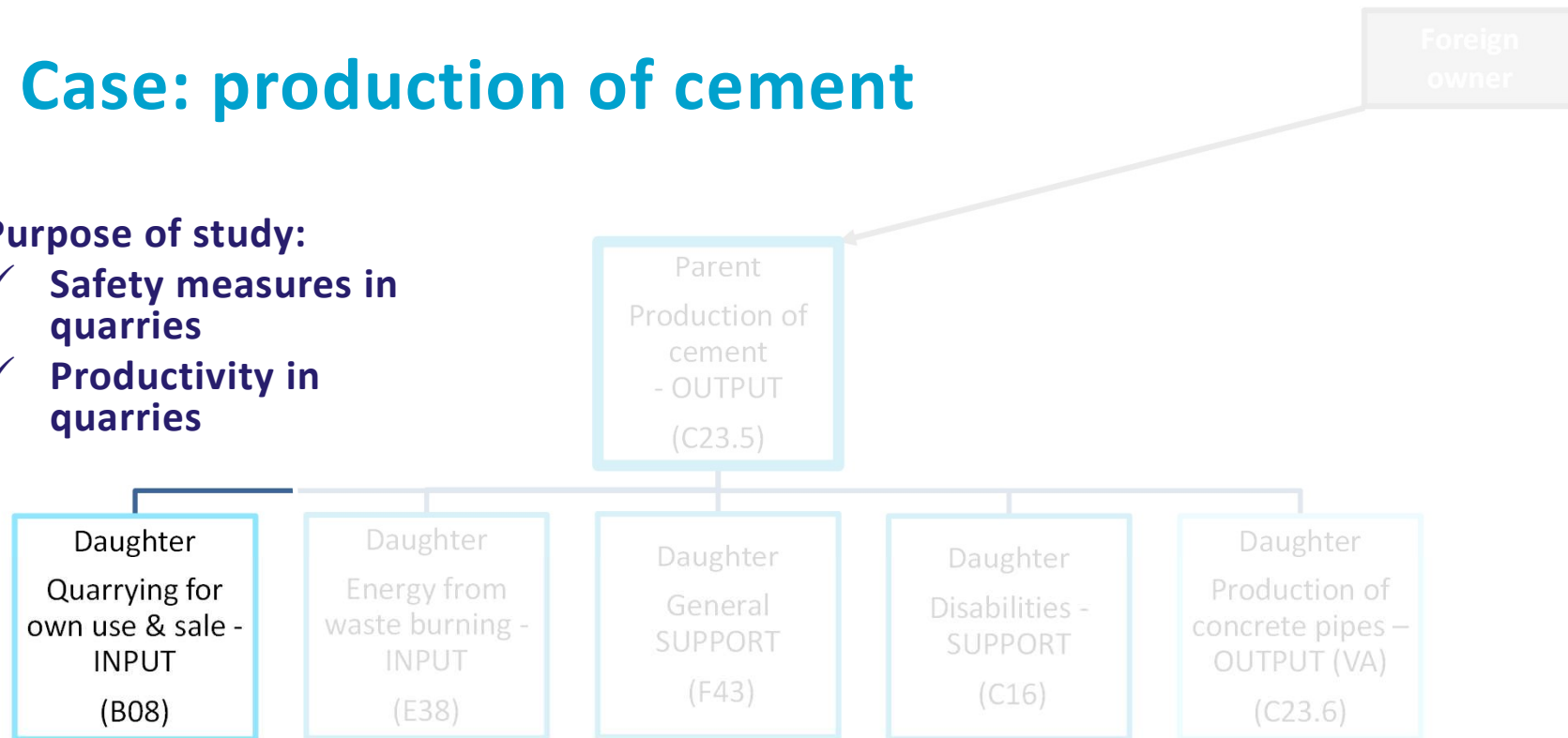
## Case: production of cement (legally)



# Case: production of cement

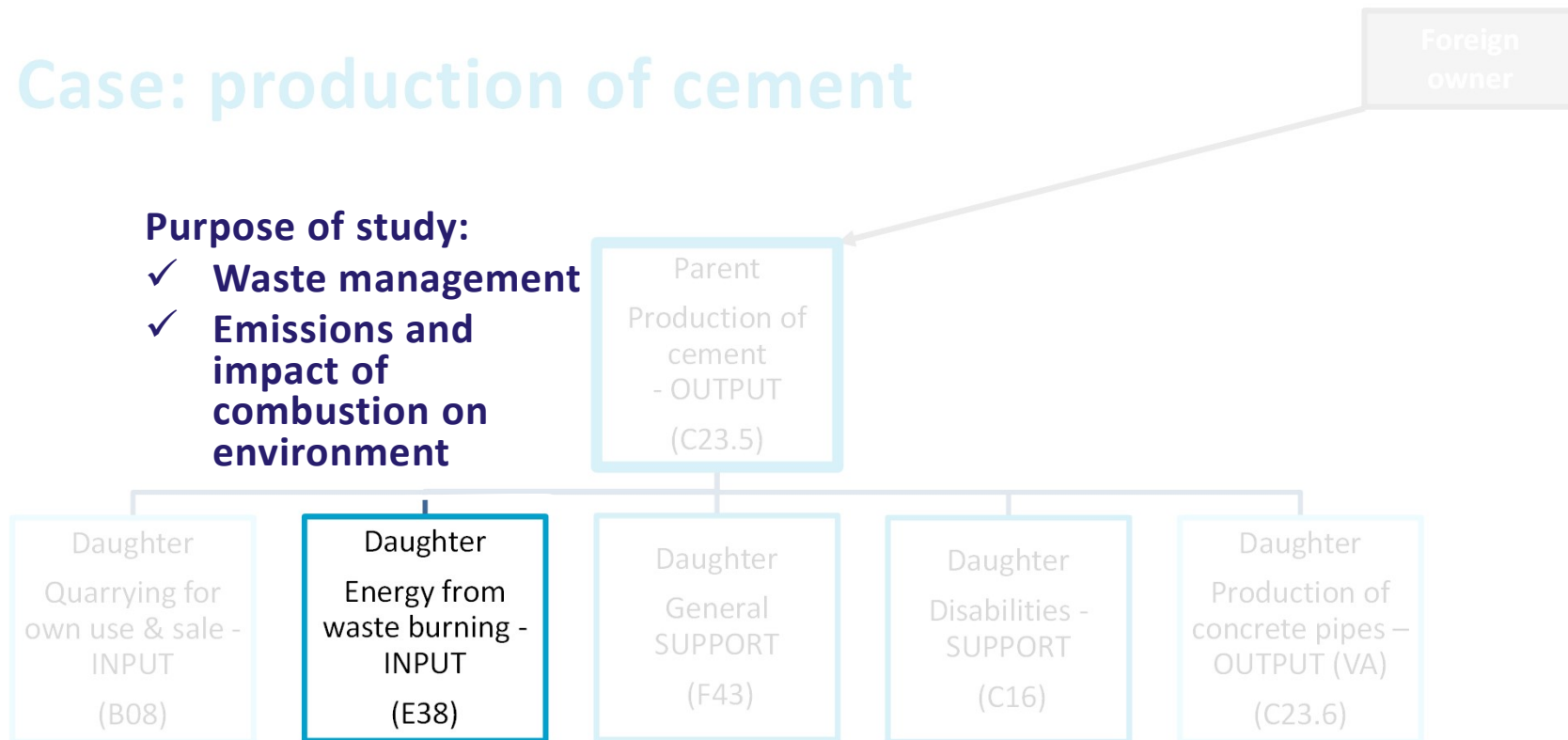
## Purpose of study:

- ✓ Safety measures in quarries
- ✓ Productivity in quarries





## Case: production of cement

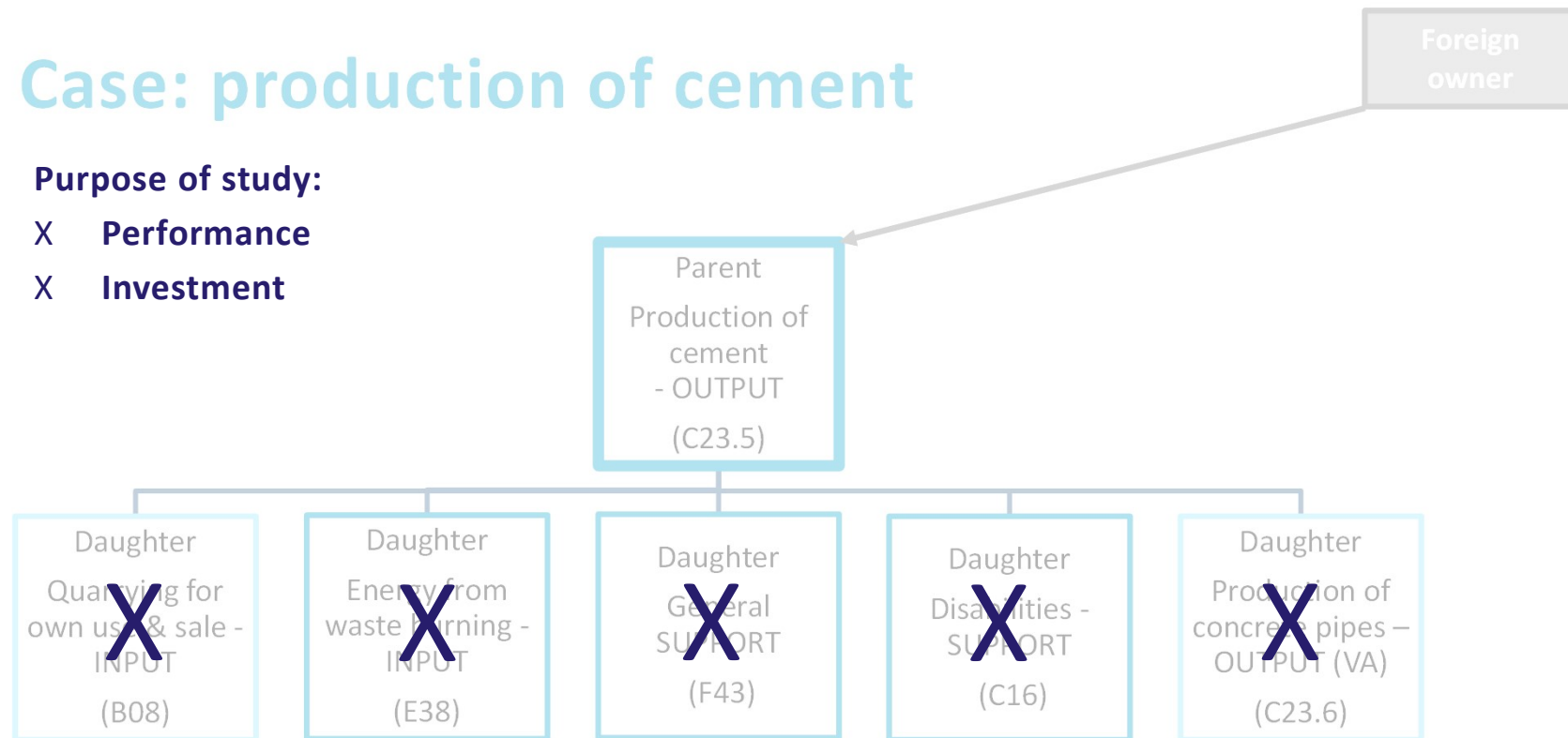


# Case: production of cement

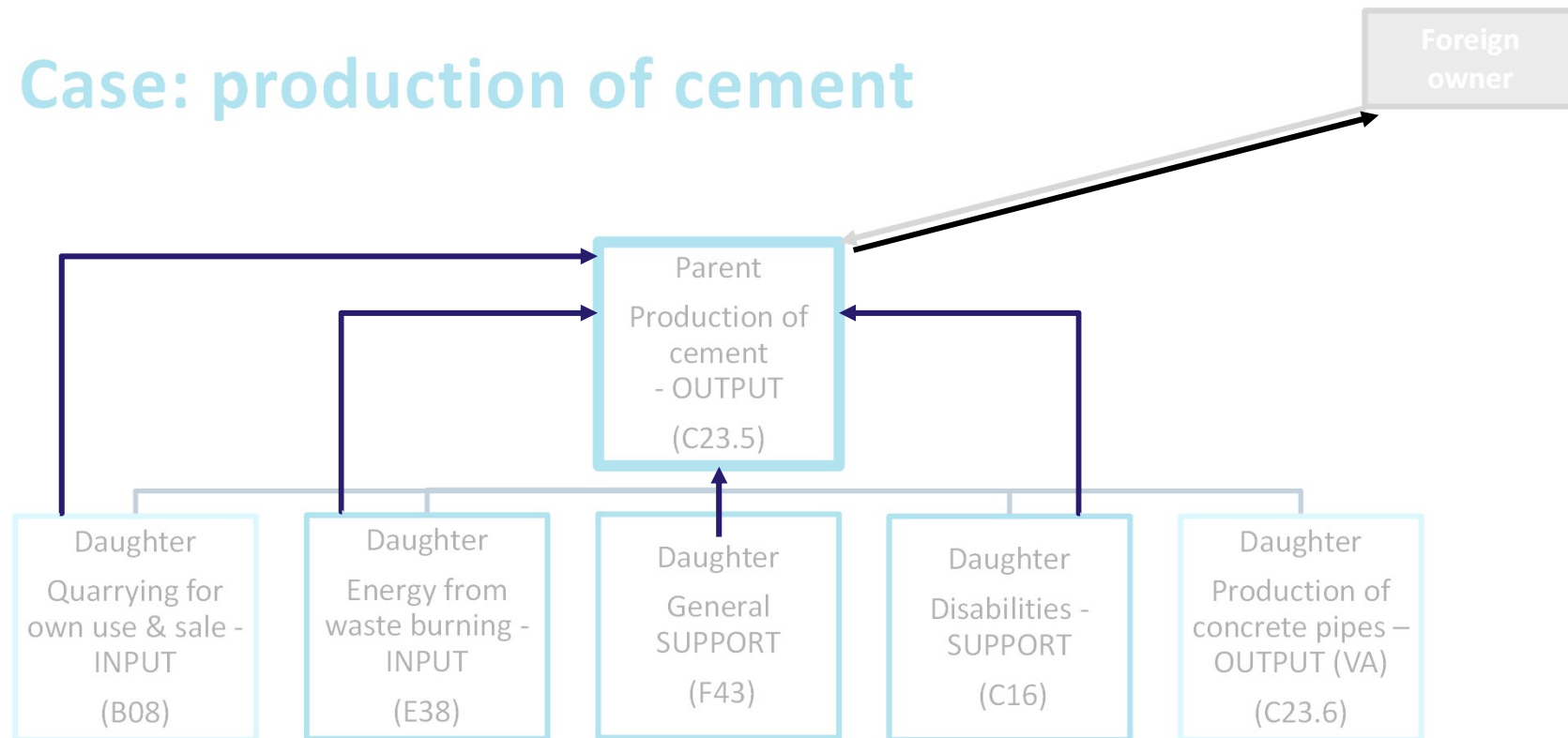
## Purpose of study:

X Performance

X Investment

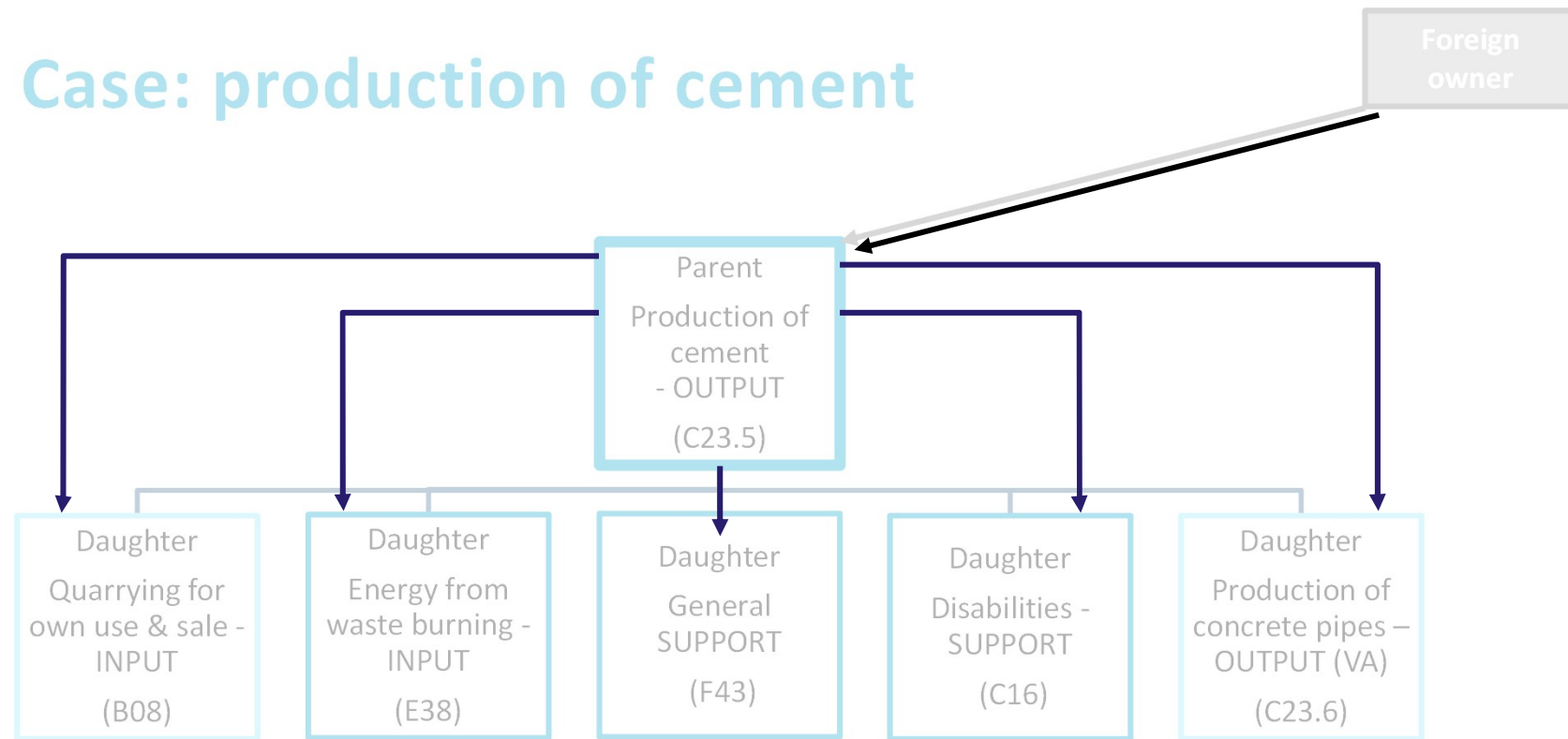


## Case: production of cement



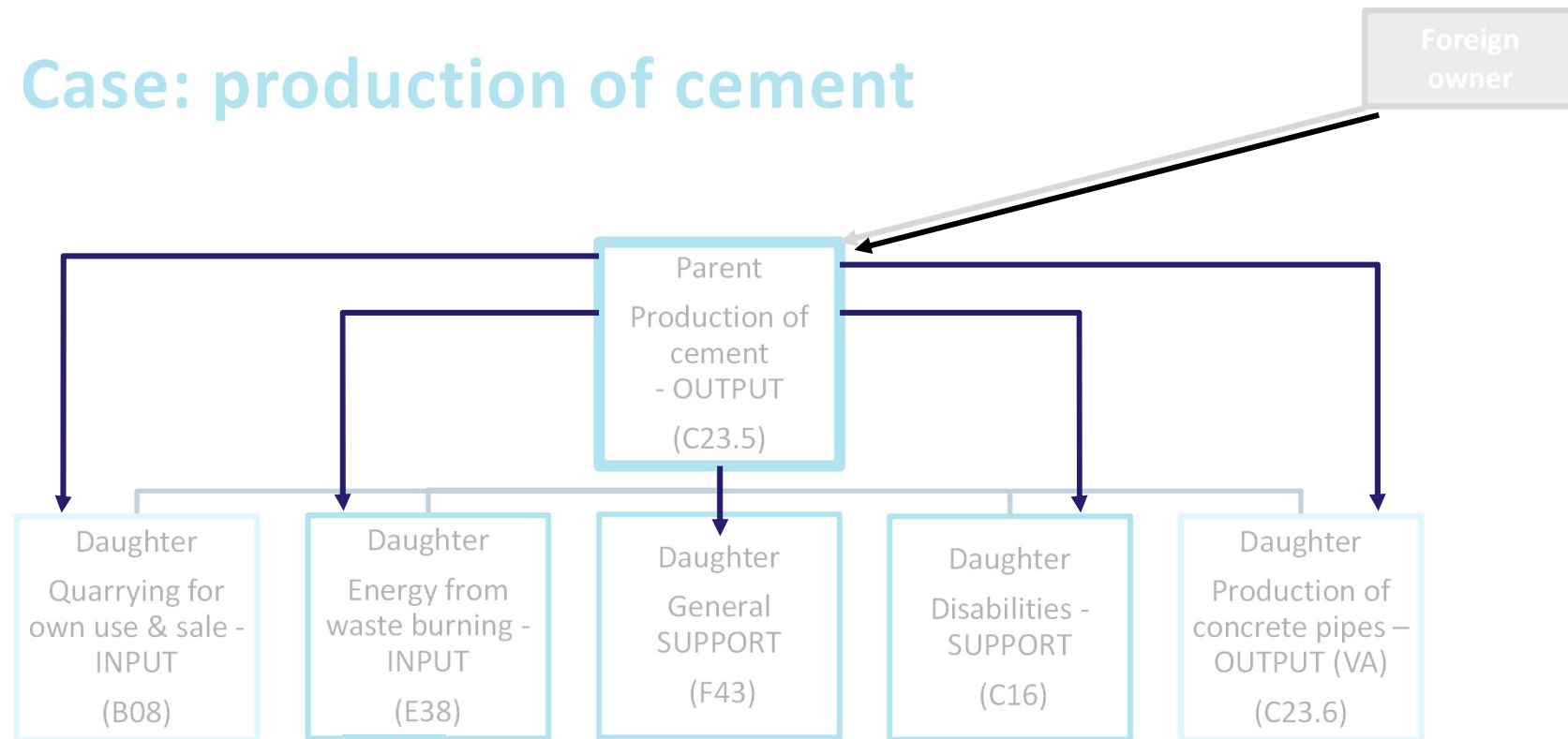
**Transfer prices**

## Case: production of cement



**Common services:** general administration  
human resources  
legal services  
finance & accounting

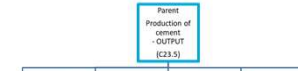
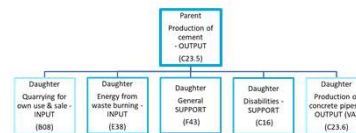
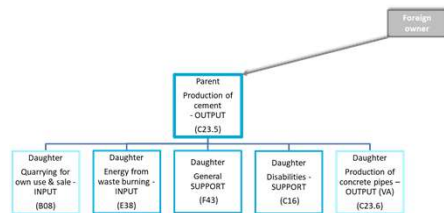
## Case: production of cement



**Decision making: strategy  
investment  
risk management**

# Which unit?

Unit of analysis for performance, investment, ...



Observational/  
collection unit



Unit of analysis for environmental impact, ...



Flour



Flour + Eggs



Flour + Meat + Oil  
+ Tomato + Cheese

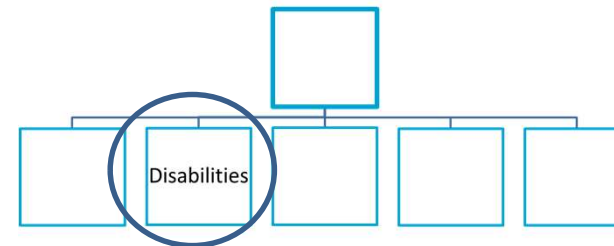
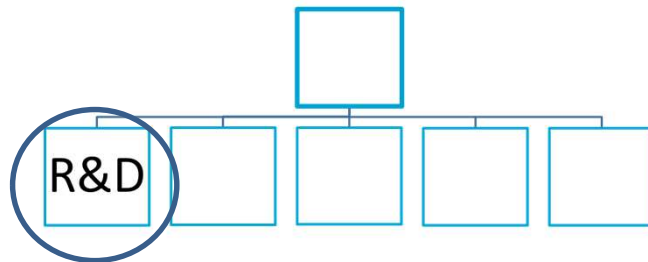


European Commission

SEB

SEB

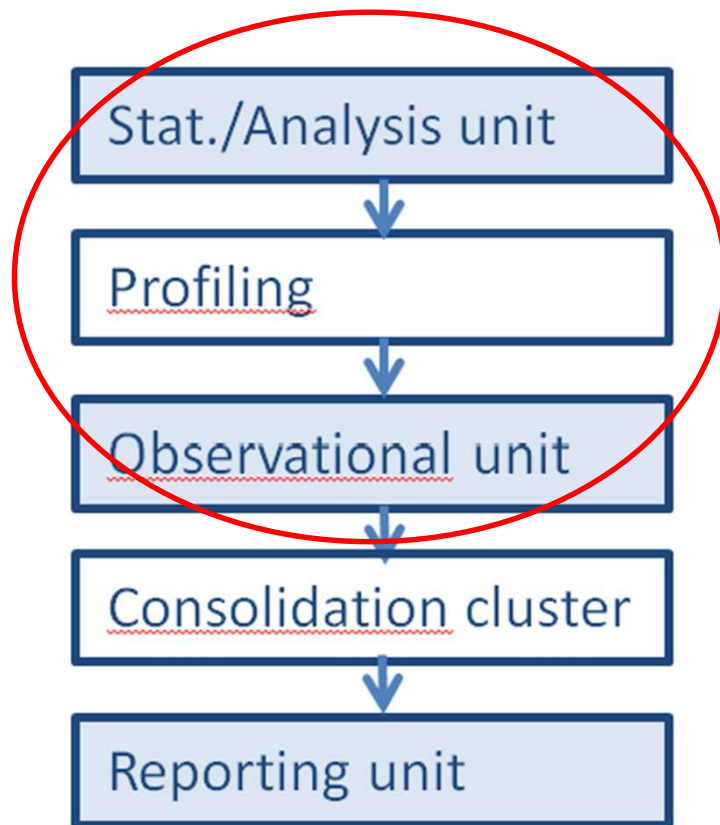
# Reporting unit



Reporting unit changed observational/collection unit.

**Definition & Communication!**

## Reducing the distance



### Profiling:

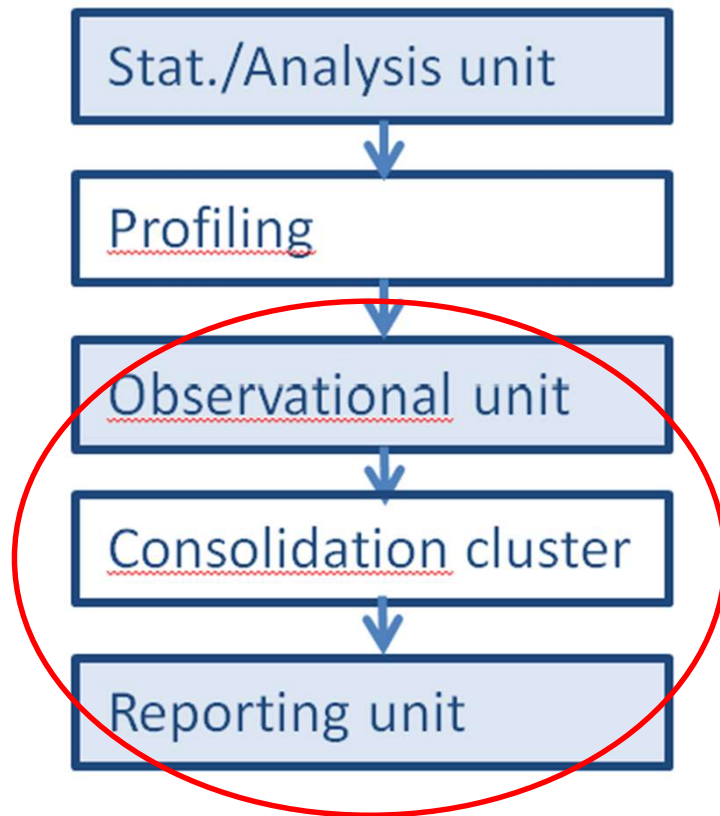
- Translate the business structure into a useful structure for data collection.
- “A method to analyse and maintain the legal, operational and accounting structure of a business at national and world level, in order to establish the statistical units within that group, their links, and the most efficient structures for the collection of statistical data.”



SEB

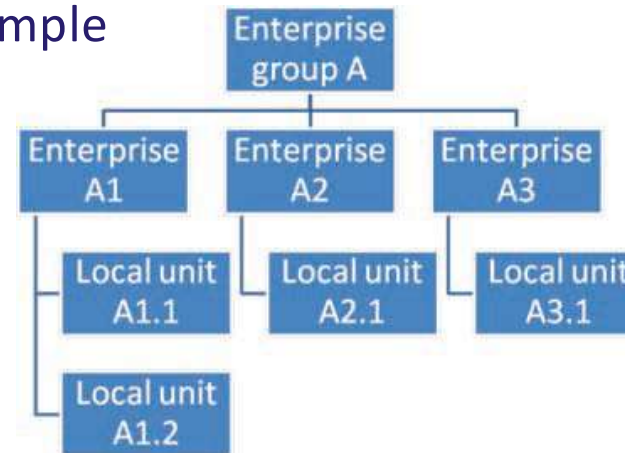


## Reducing the distance

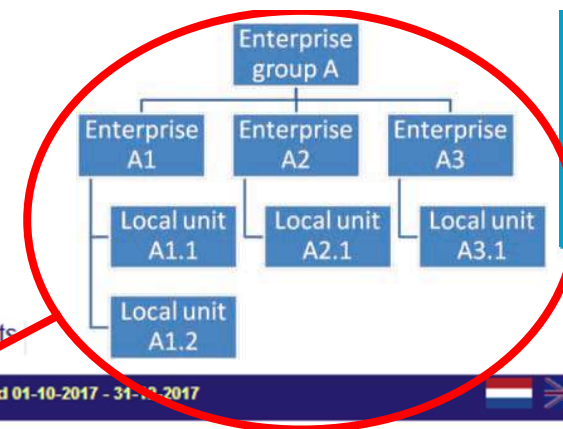


### Consolidation cluster:

- Informing the observational unit about the structure it should report.
- Example



# Consolidation cluster



CBS-DNB Finance of Enterprise and Balance of Payments

Declaration overview | Importing data | Your company information | Import/sending status | Current declaration: Quarter 4, Period 01-10-2017 - 31-12-2017

Importing data | View import-log

Index

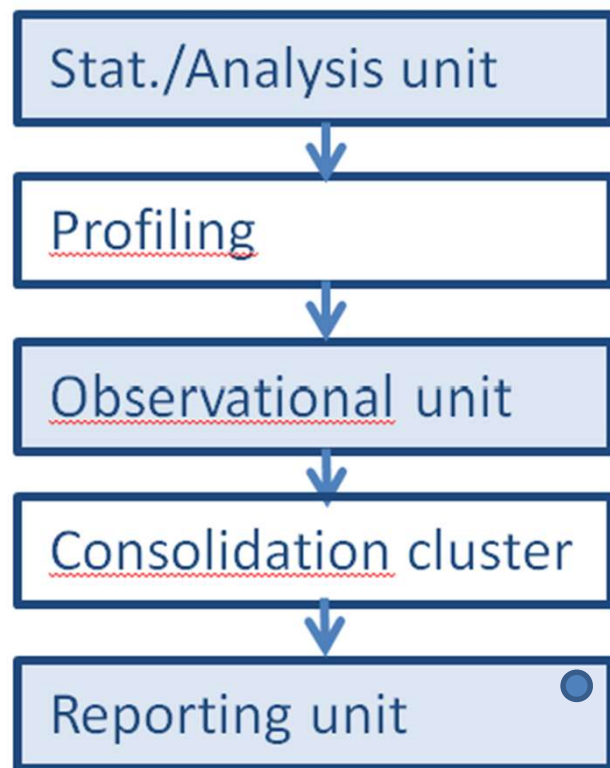
[Homepage](#)  
[General questions](#)  
[Consolidation cluster](#)  
[Balance sheet](#)  
[Profit and loss statement and FTE's](#)  
[Comments and suggestions](#)  
[Checking and sending](#)  
[Overview](#)

CBS Number		Participation rate		Legal name	Seat
81292368			I	EG A	
- 8086793	1	100	I	Ent A1	
-- 17130476	1	100	I	LU A1.1	
-- 78740053	1	100	I	LU A1.2	
- 88362167	1	100	I	Ent A2	
-- 7840053	1	100	I	LU A2.1	
- 82631276	1	100	I	Ent A3	
-- 79437354	1	100	I	LU A3.1	

Does the consolidation method shown correspond to what you have agreed with Statistics Netherlands?
 ☒ Yes
 ☐ No

To startpage | Agree

## Reducing the distance: Errors in this process

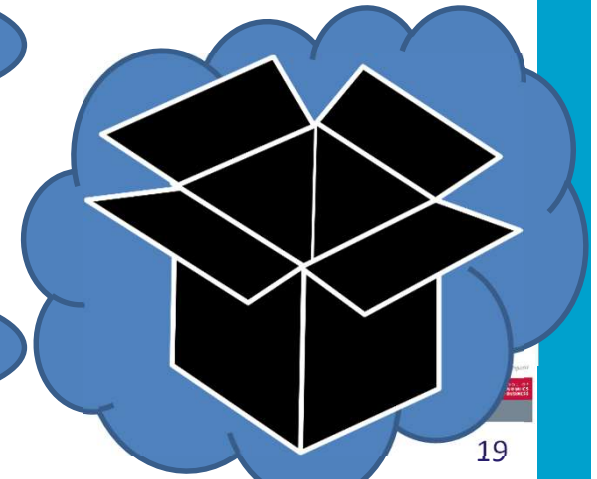


Specification errors

Profiling errors

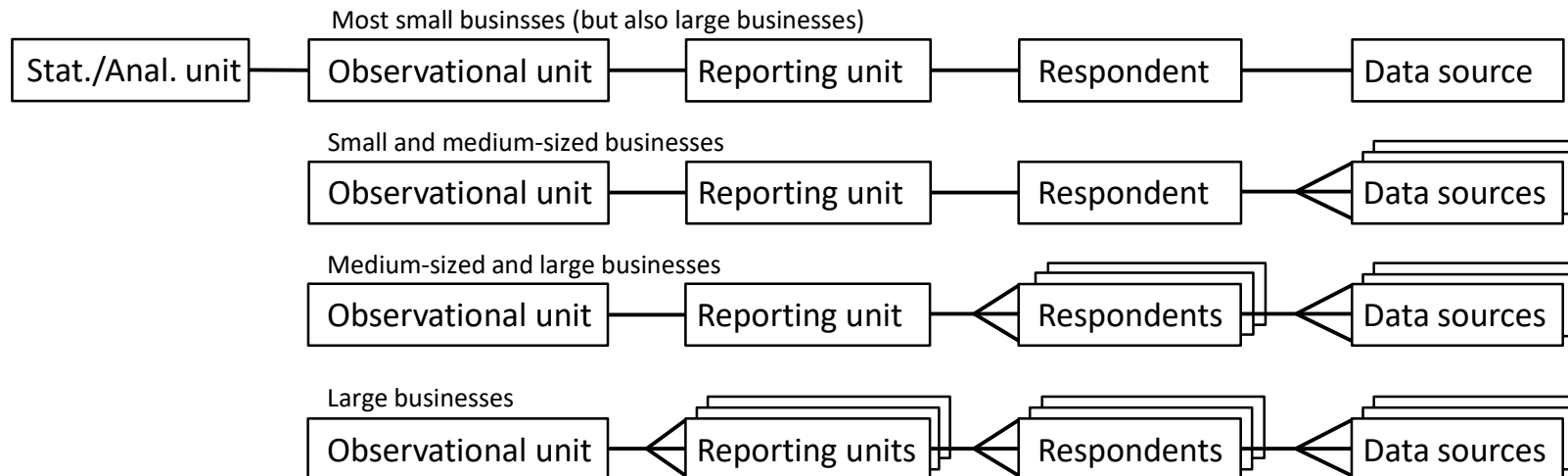
Consolidation errors

You may  
get data, but  
not about the  
“right” unit:  
**unit errors**



# The response process in businesses

- Many data sources, at various locations
  - Many people, at various locations
  - Many sub-units
  - Time: when data are available, and businesses have time
- In various combinations



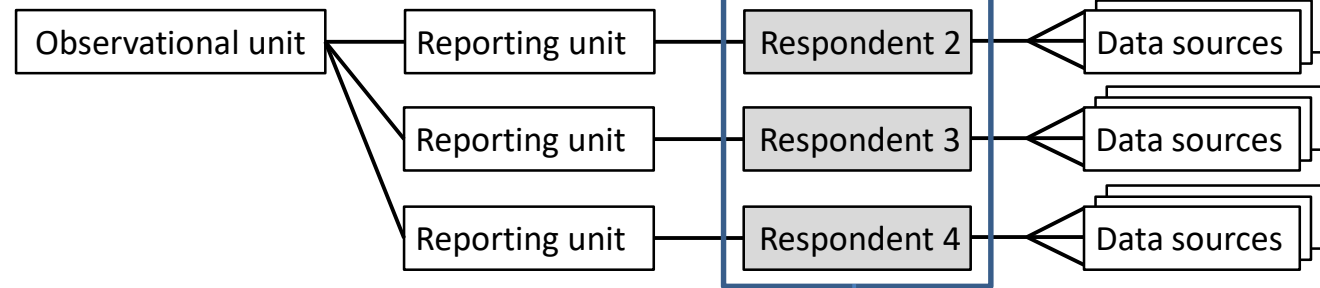
# Example: Complex response process

Two separate surveys:

- Stats Netherlands

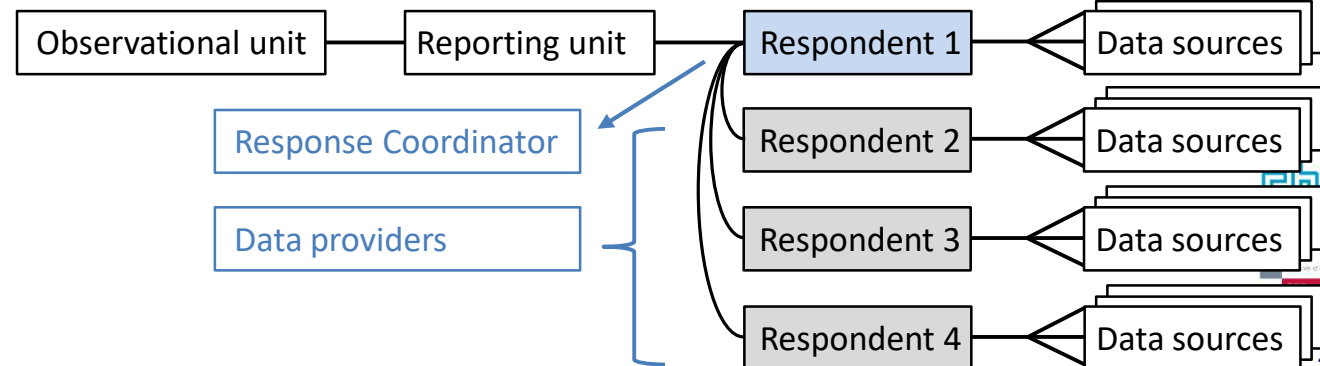


- National Bank



One combined survey:

- Stats Netherlands



- National Bank

## Example: Complex response process

Two separate surveys:

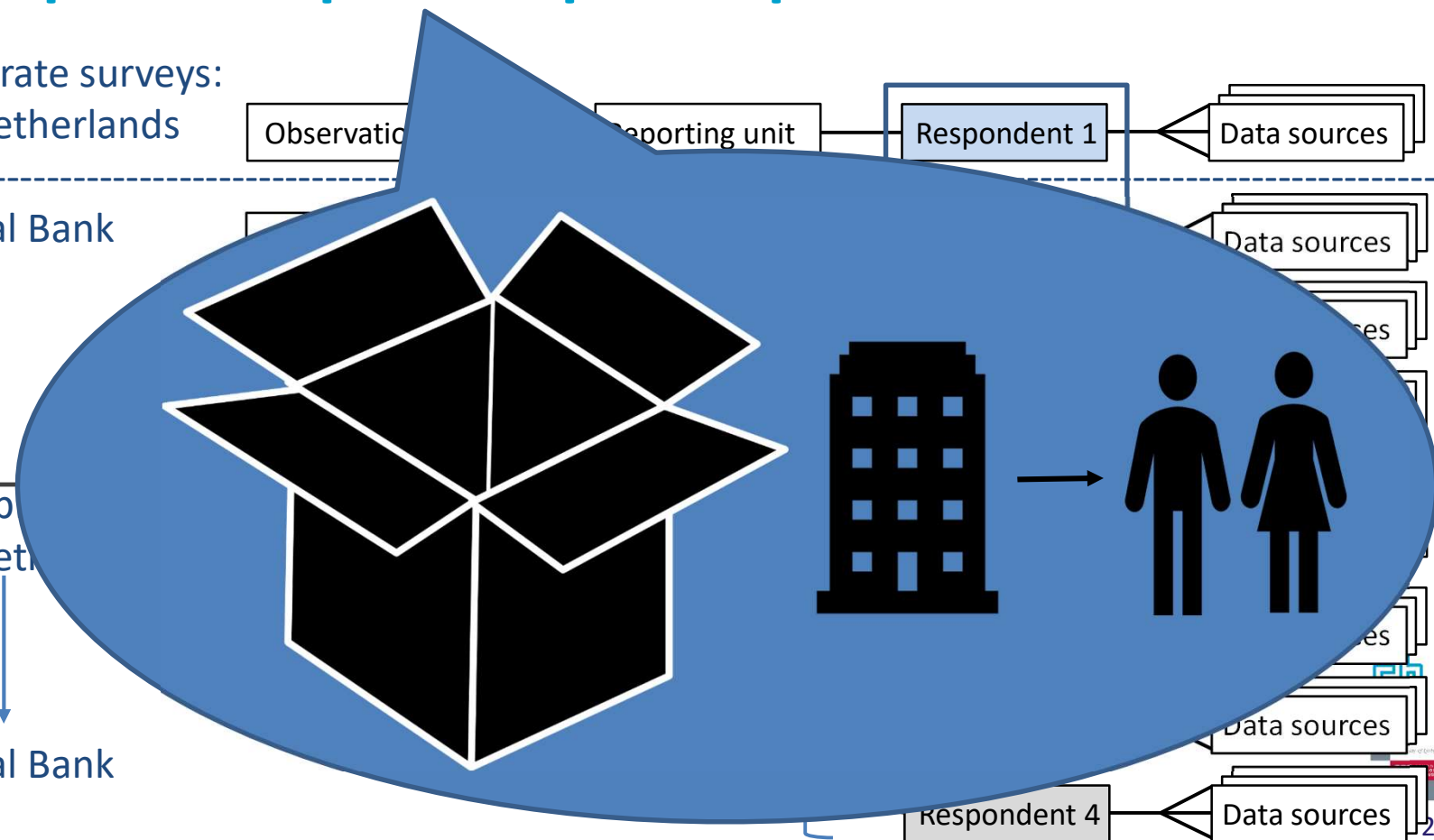
- Stats Netherlands

- National Bank

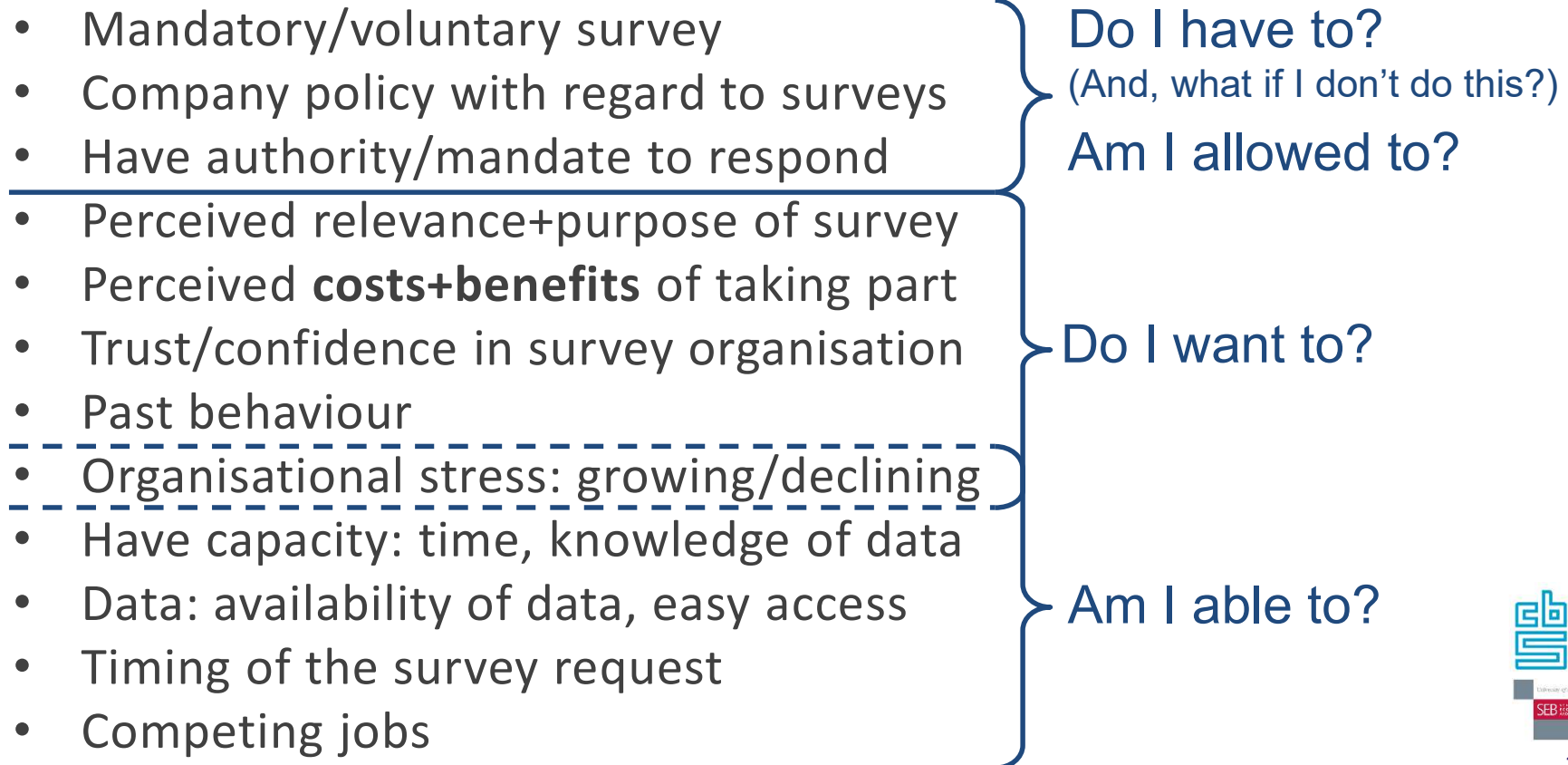
One combined survey:

- Stats Netherlands

- National Bank



# Understanding the decision to participate



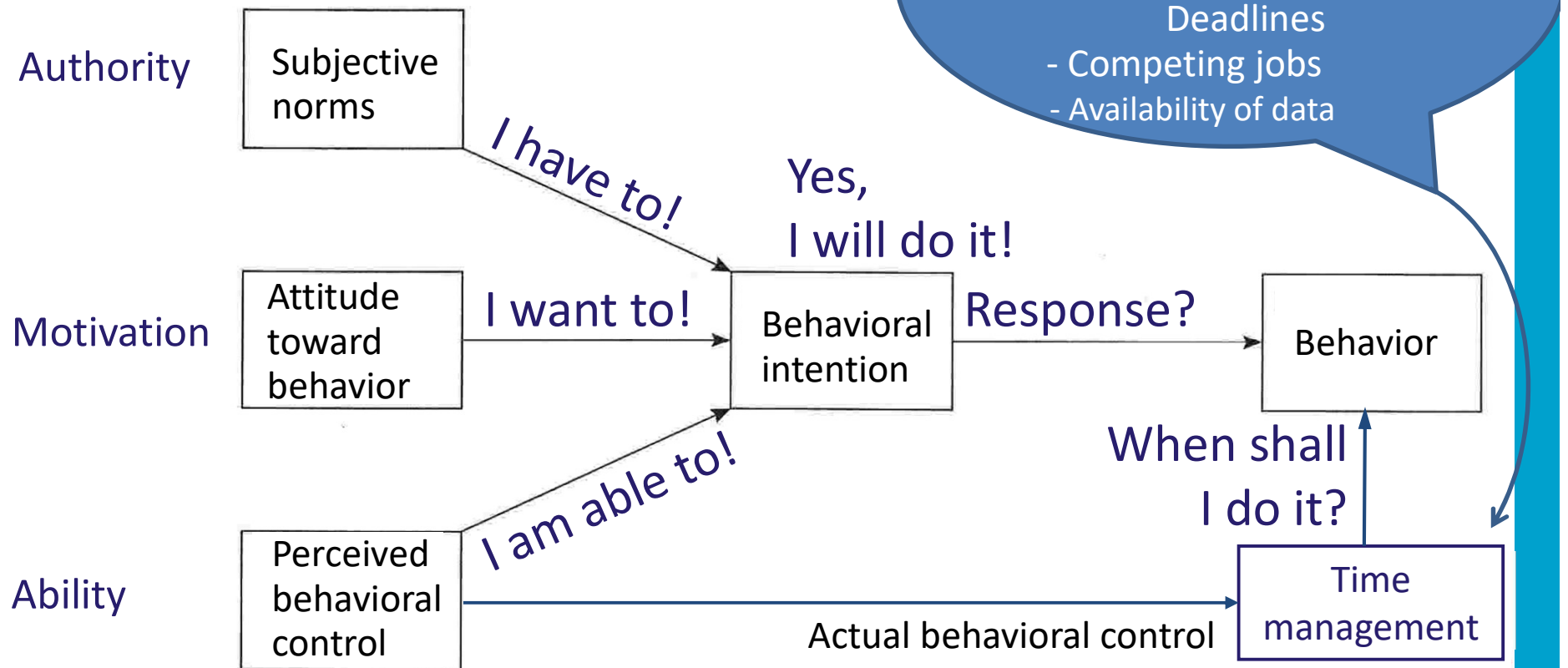
# Understanding the decision to participate

1. Do I have to? Am I allowed to?
  - ≈ **Authority**
  - ≈ External motivation
  - ≈ Social and business norms
2. Do I want to?
  - ≈ Internal **motivation**
  - ≈ Willingness, relevance
  - ≈ Attitude reg. participation
3. Am I able to?
  - ≈ **Ability**
  - ≈ Capacity

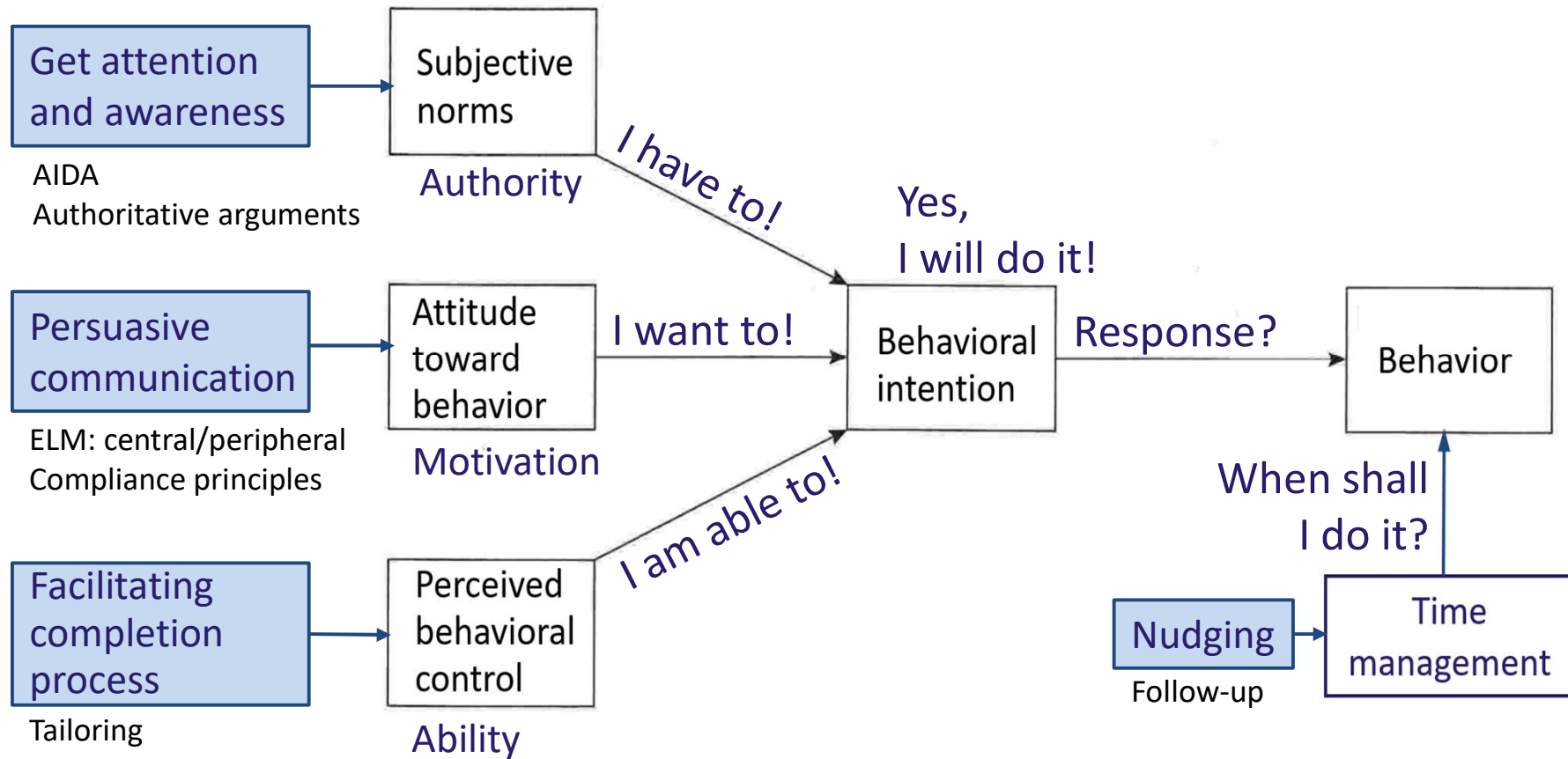
- Tomaskovic-Devey et al. (1994):  
Organizational theory of survey  
nonresponse
- **Theory of Planned Behavior**
- Self-Determination Theory



# Theory of planned behavior



# How we can influence these factors?

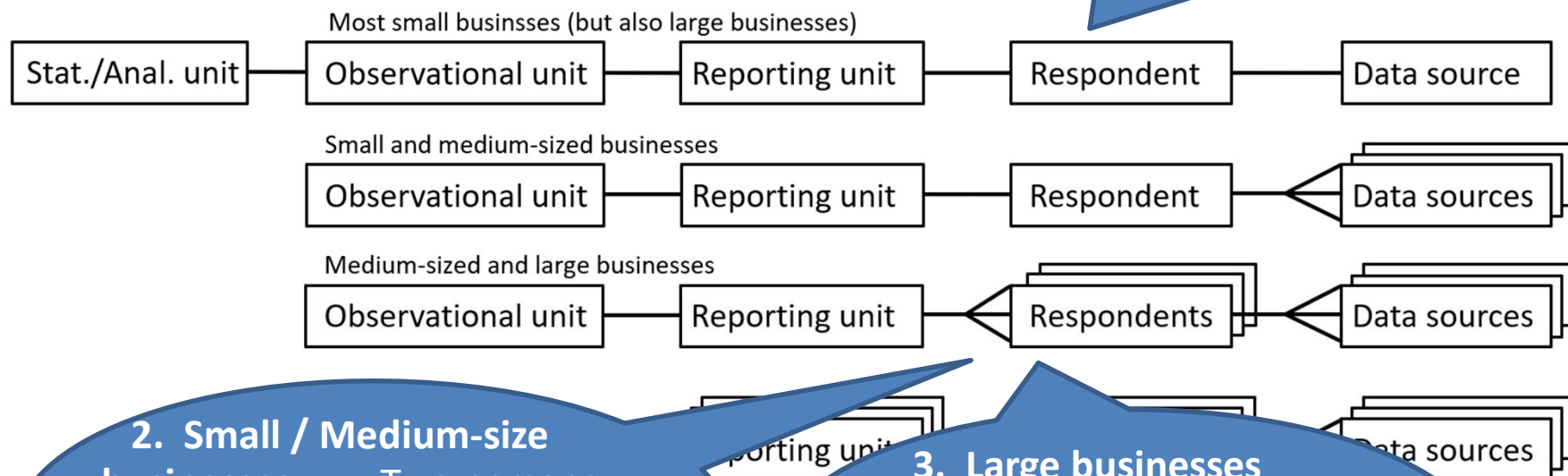


# Apply to response process in businesses: three cases

## 1. Small businesses:

One person in response process:

- Owner/director: contact person / respondent



## 2. Small / Medium-size businesses

Two persons:

- Contact person: owner/director
- Respondent: external/internal accountant

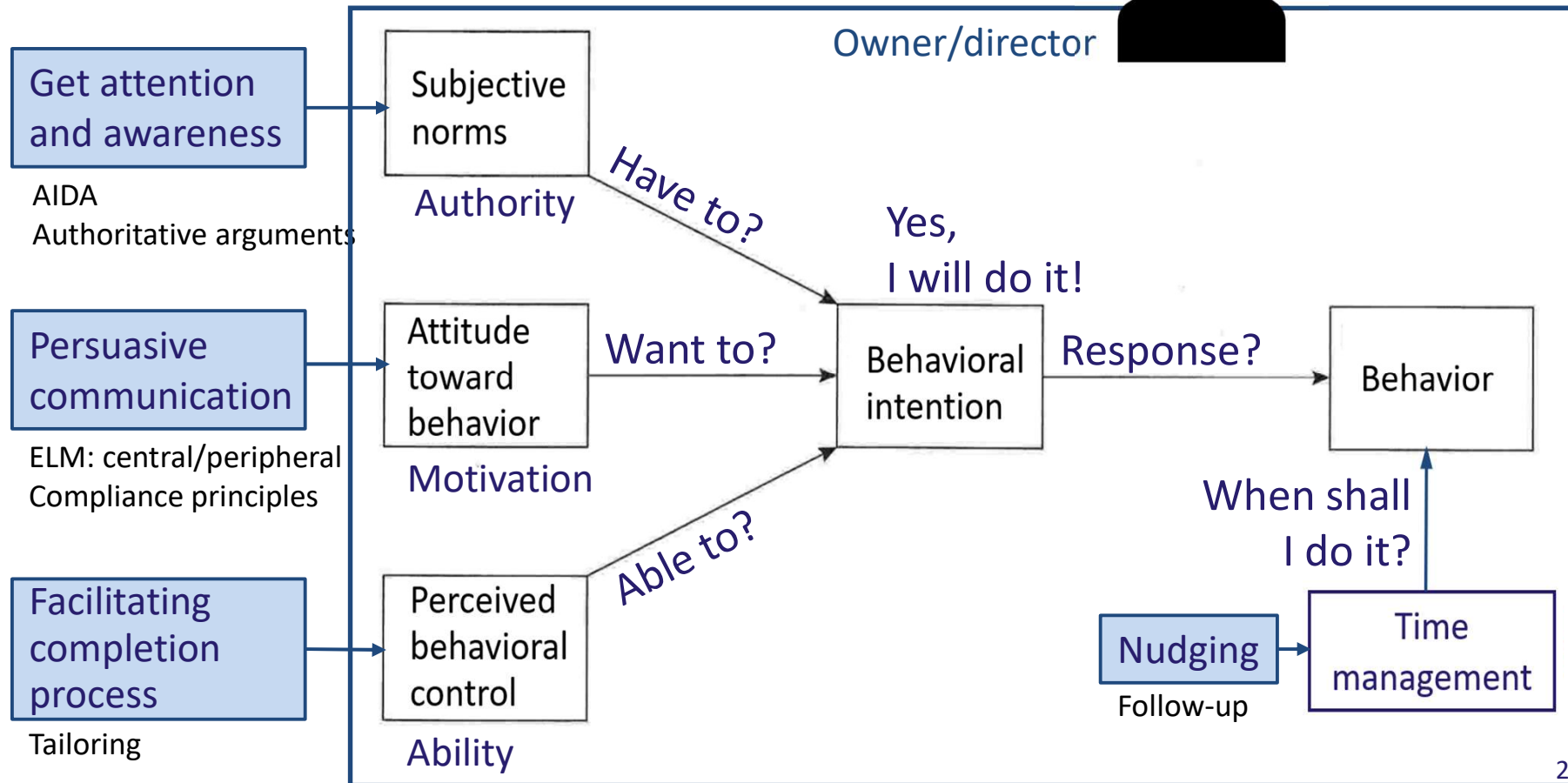
## 3. Large businesses

Many people involved:

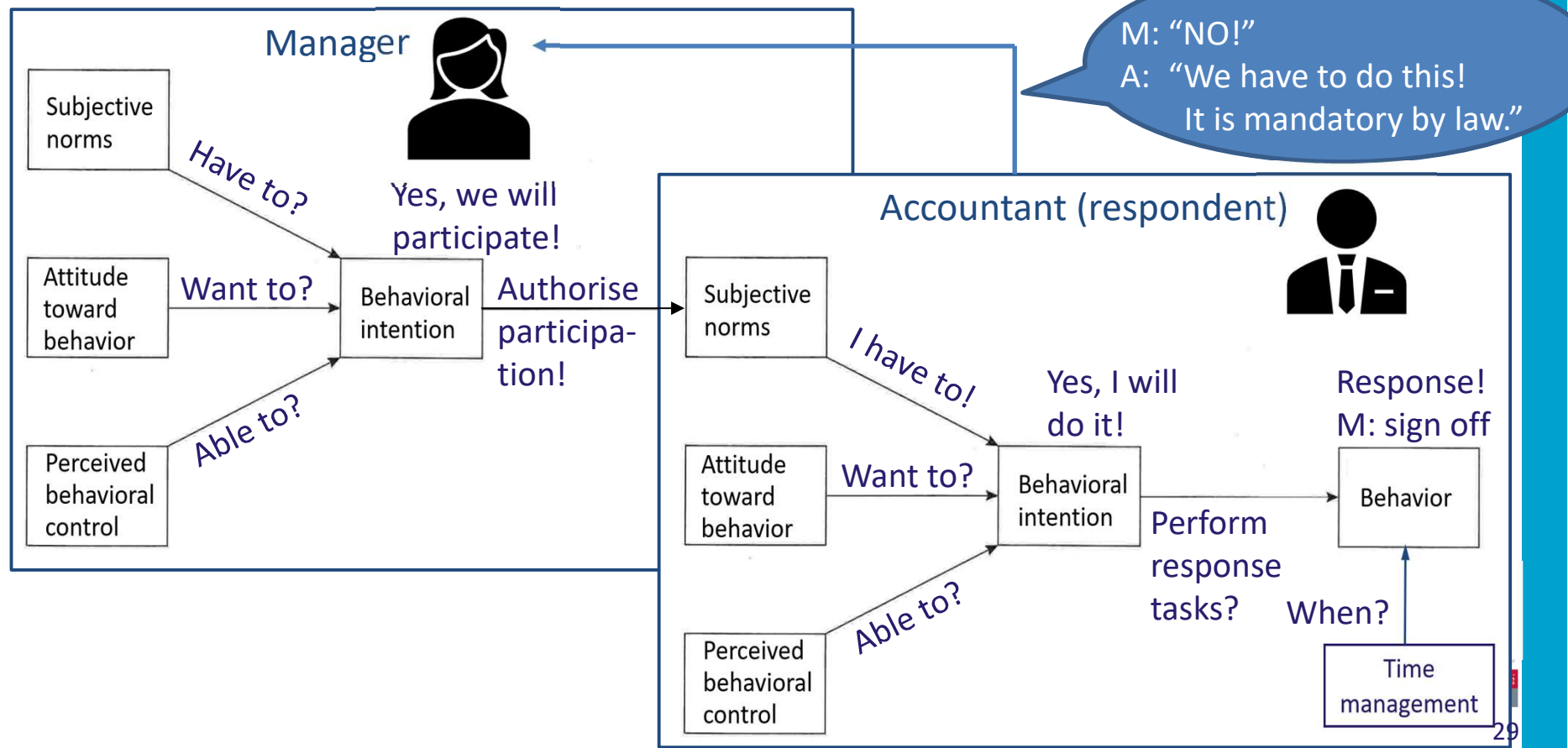
- Contact person: Manager
- Coordinators, respondents, Data providers



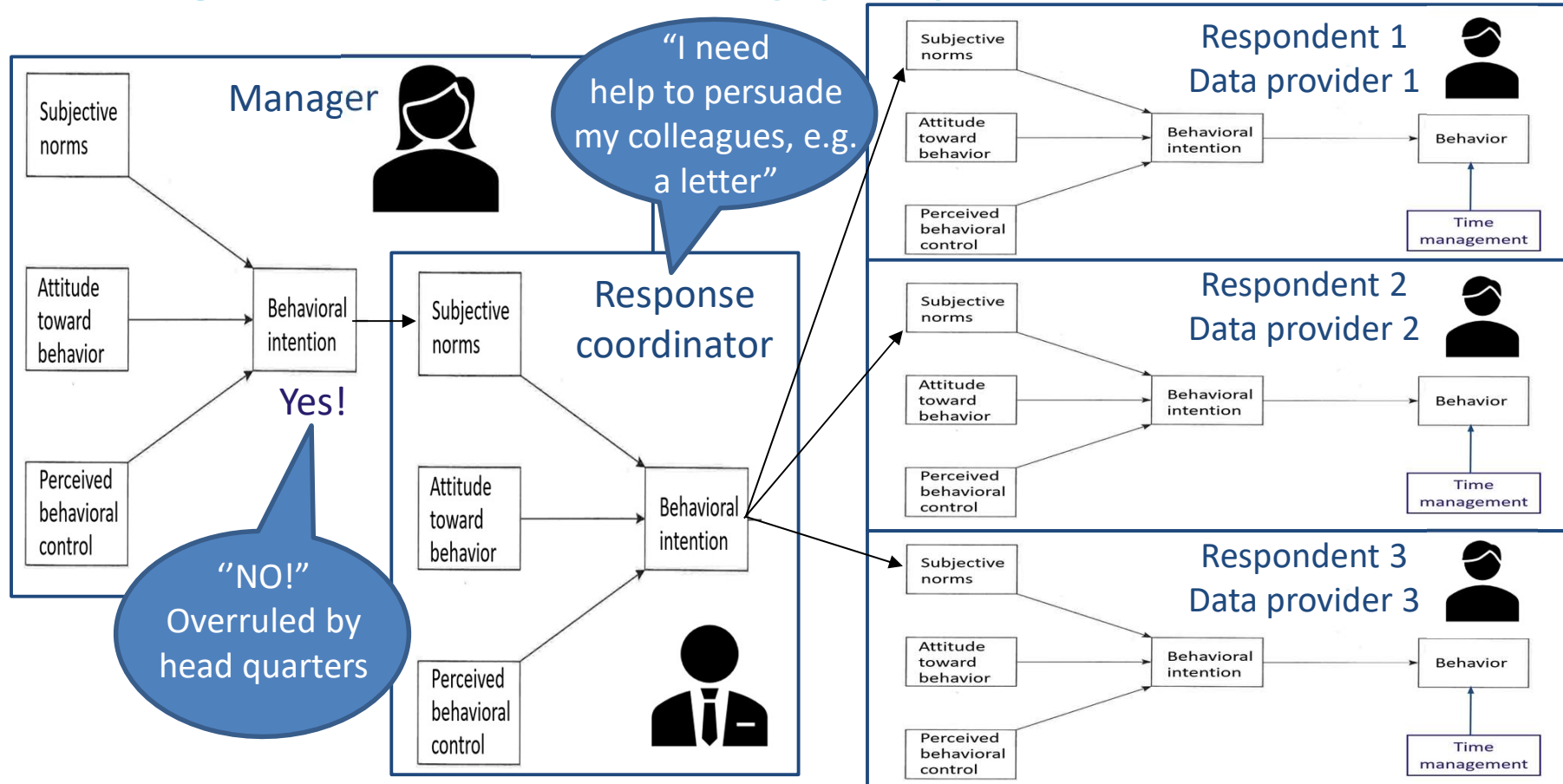
# Small business: 1 person



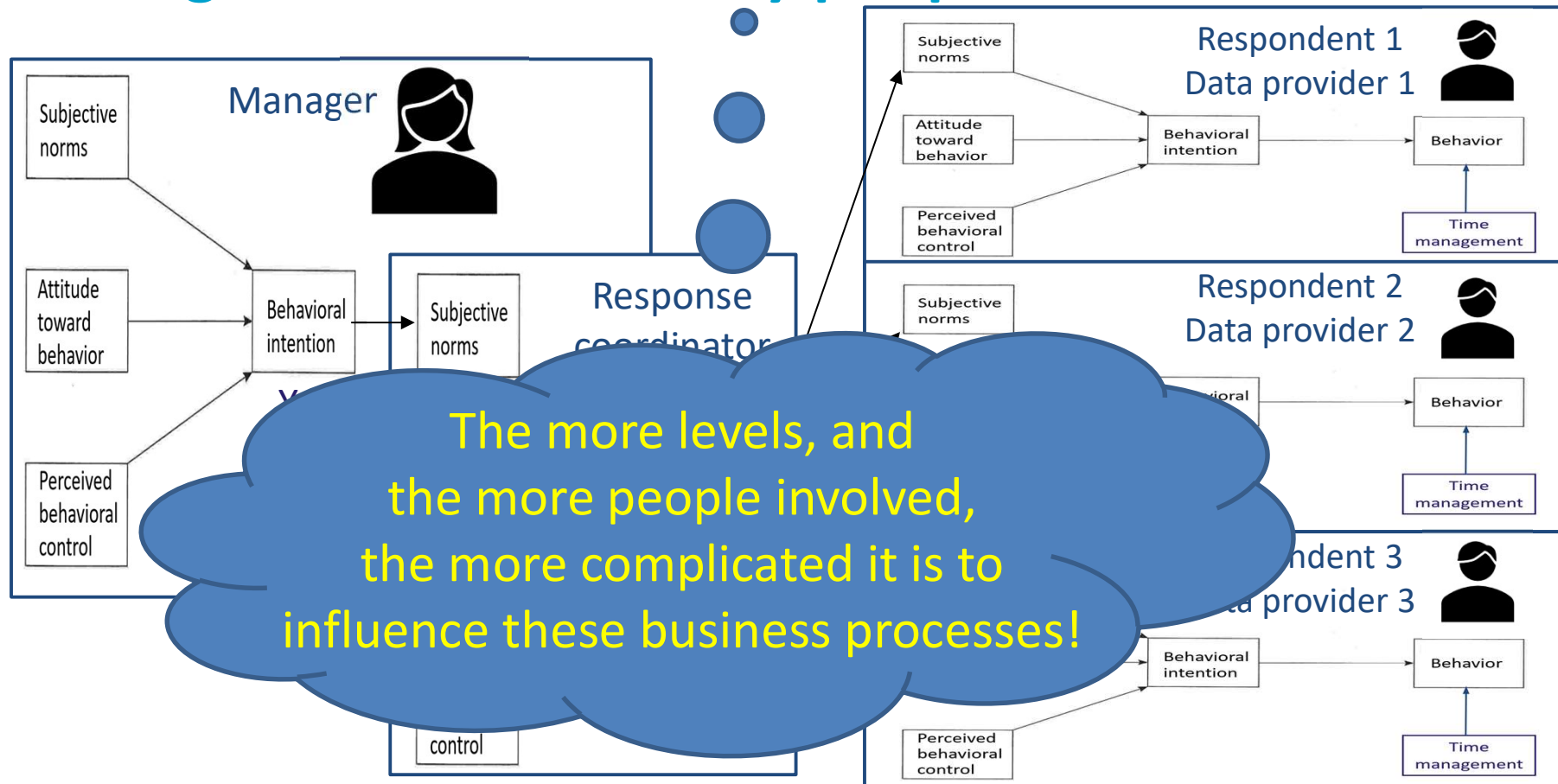
## Small / medium-size business: 2 people



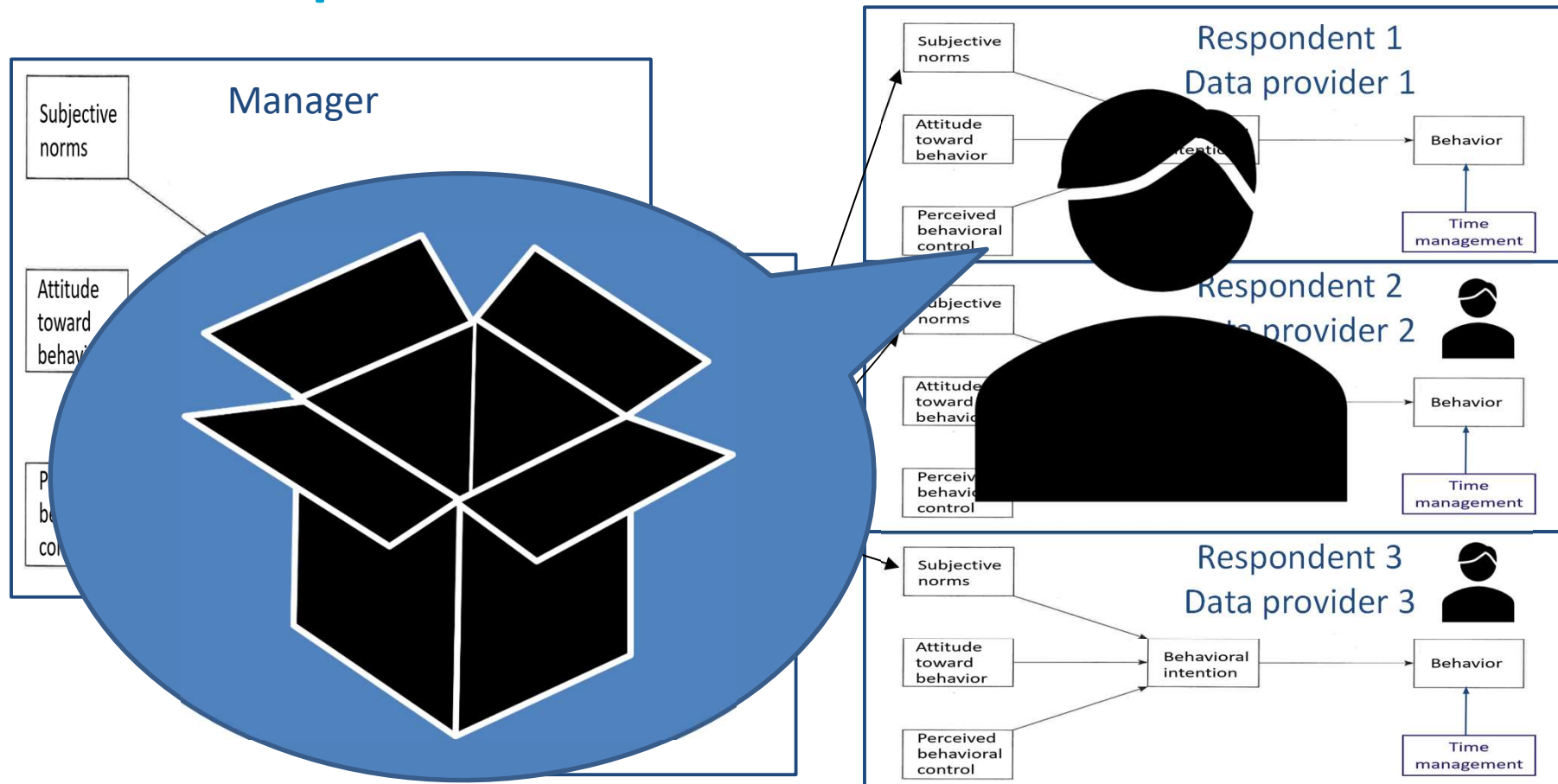
# Large businesses: many people



# Large businesses: many people

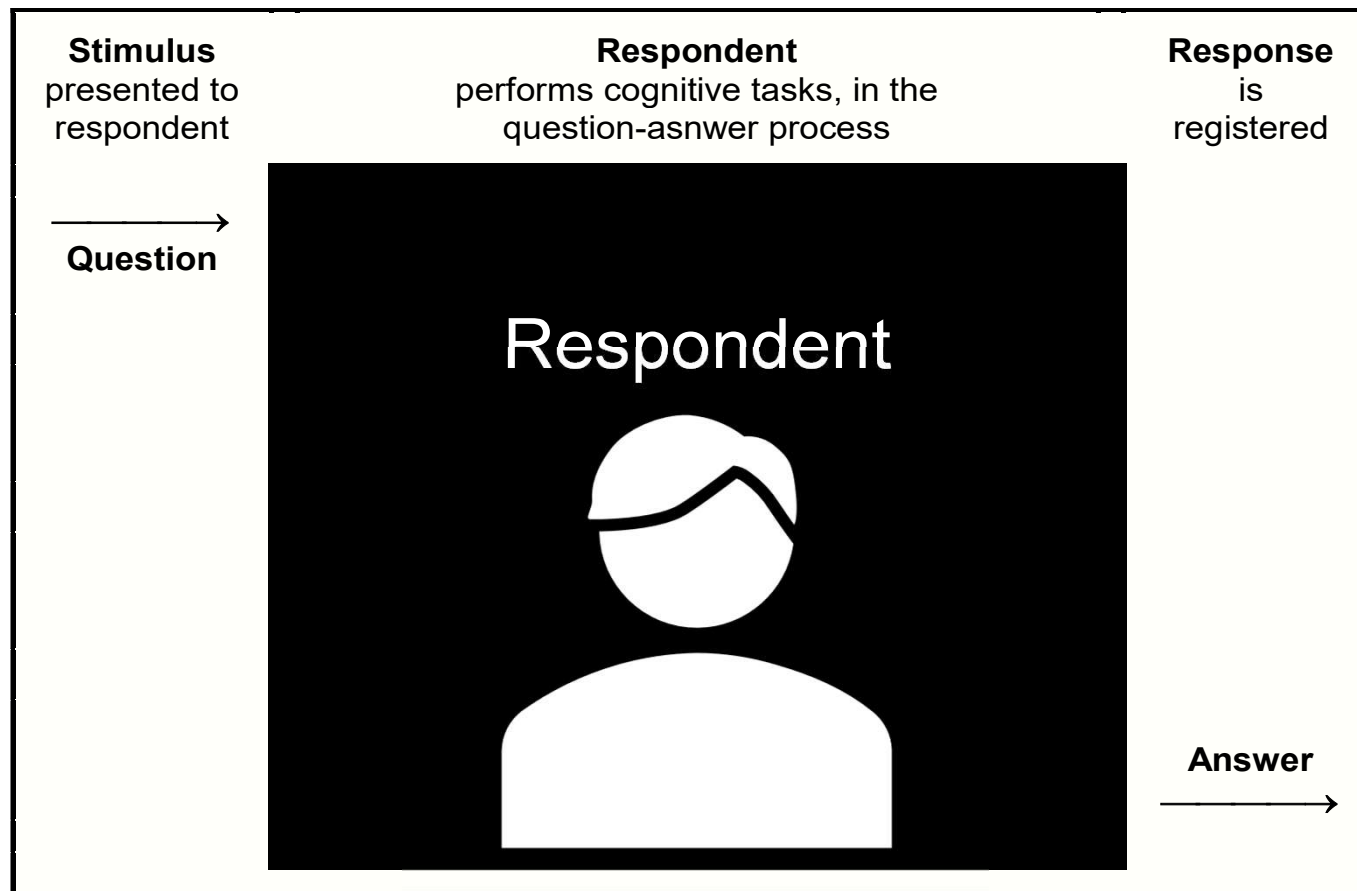


# The respondent



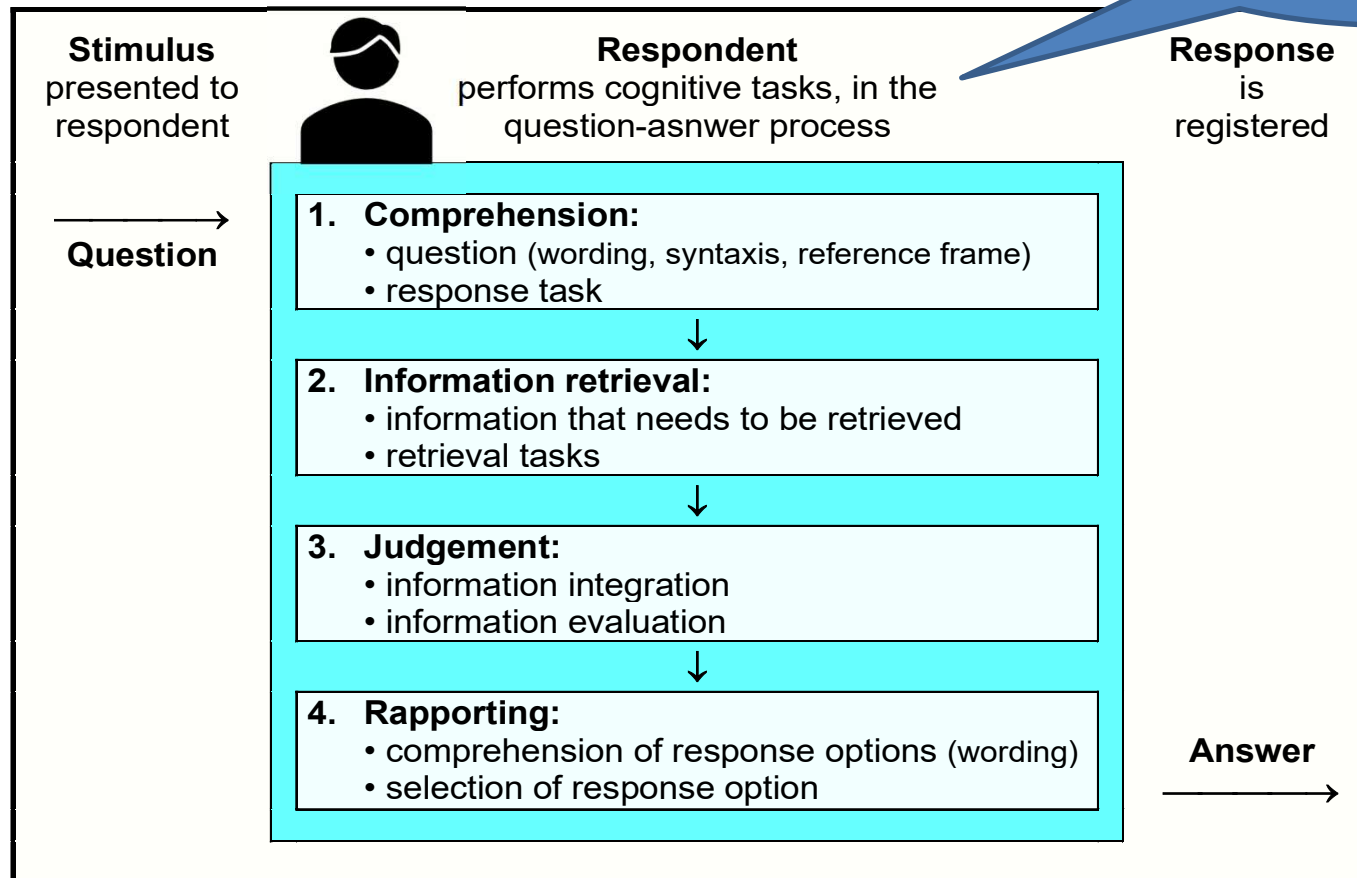


# The respondent: performing response tasks

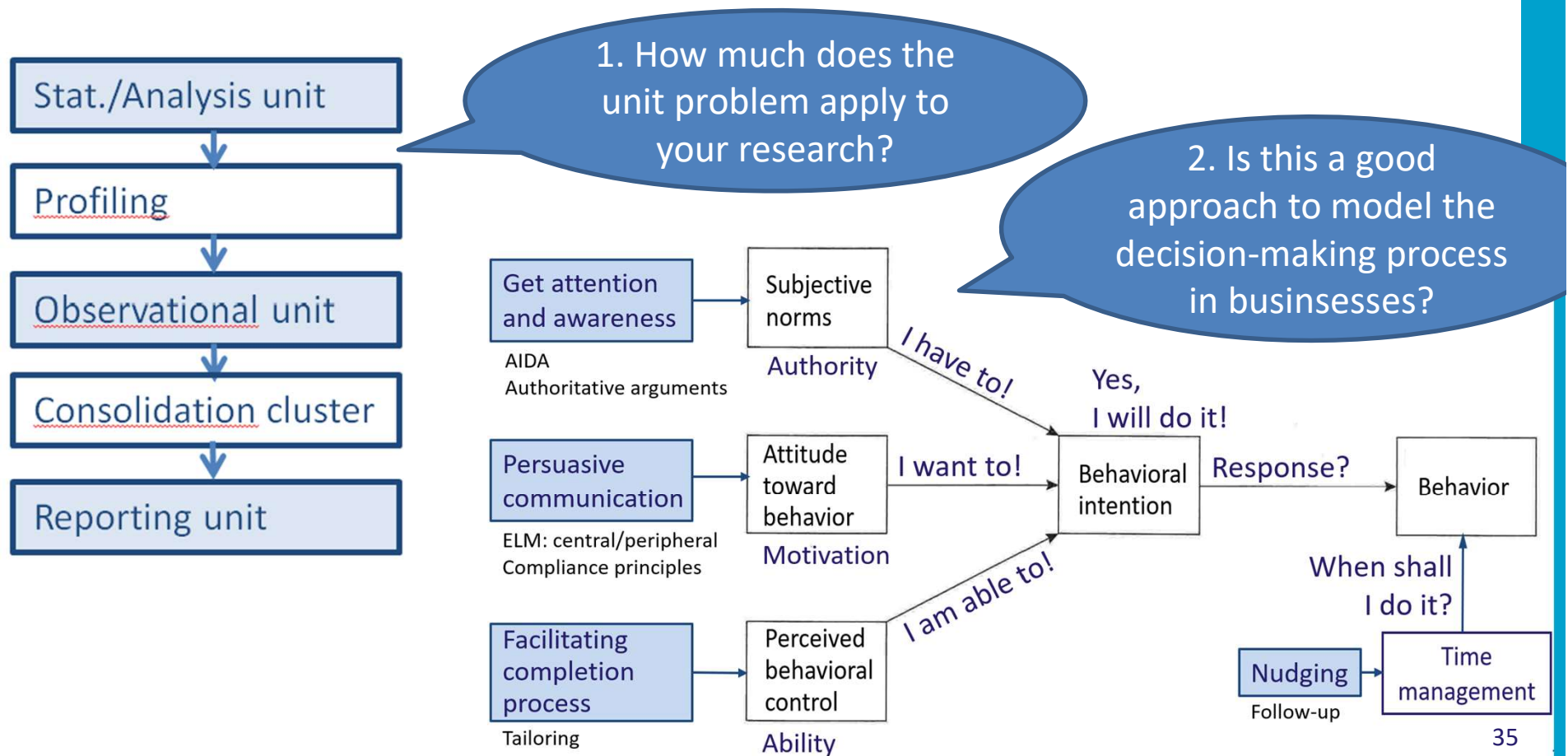


# Question-answer process

Pre-testing  
questionnaires



# Questions for discussion



Thank you  
for your attention

Further reading

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[mojca.bavdaz@ef.uni-lj.si](mailto:mojca.bavdaz@ef.uni-lj.si)

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