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## **VEDLEGG til Statistikkrådet**

# **SUMMARY REPORT ON THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM COMPLIANCE WITH THE EUROPEAN STATISTICS CODE OF PRACTICE**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

#### **Description of general level of compliance *of the key data producers (other than NSI, NCB)***

The self-assessment and the review has identified that the degree of compliance varies between the seven agencies so far involved in the process. All agencies have agreed on a list of actions in order to improve compliance with the code of practice.

#### **List of main strengths and areas for improvement.**

The main strength of those agencies that produce statistics based on internal administrative sources is the closeness to these sources and thus also high degree of awareness of any quality problems in these sources. It may, however, be difficult to give priority to the introduction of statistical and systematic/macro-oriented approaches to quality control in such systems.

The main areas of improvement are in addition:

- Defining a clear role of the statistical function within the organisation
- Setting clear rules for handling confidential information and release to third-parties for use as basis for statistics and analysis
- Formulating clear dissemination rules and procedures and providing improved user documentation.

### **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM**

#### **(Legal) Basis for the system / co-ordination;**

The statistics act of June 16, 1989 provides the legal basis for the Norwegian statistical system. The law defines Official statistics as statistics which are made available to the public by Statistics Norway or another state agency (Section 1-2), and further in Section 2-1 gives the basis for the decision making process for the production of official statistics. This power, which in the law is said to be the King (the Government) has been delegated to the Ministry of Finance pursuant to Royal Decree No. 387 of 16 June 1989, and the Ministry has further delegated this task to Statistics Norway.

Thus at present, only Statistics Norway is a producer of official statistics as provided for in the statistics law. However, there are several other agencies that produce statistics in response to European requirements, mainly linked to their administrative role and their responsibility for compiling and updating administrative information.

The co-ordination role of Statistics Norway in relation to other agencies planning to carry out major statistical investigations as well as modifications to administrative registration systems is specified in

Section 3-3 of the Statistics Act as well as in Chapter 2 of the Regulations concerning the implementation and supplementation of the Statistics Act.

**Coordination role of the NSI / main co-ordination mechanism;**

Statistics Norway is exercising its co-ordination role through comprehensive co-operation and collaboration with the other producers of statistics and owners of administrative registers. A significant step in this context was the creation of the Statistics Council in 2004. It is an advisory body, headed by the Director General of Statistics Norway and consists of 24 producers of statistics and owners of central administrative registers. Its main role is to strengthen the co-ordination of official statistics in Norway. The detailed mandate, composition, as well as the minutes of meetings and the annual reports of the Statistics Council are published on the website of Statistics Norway in the following address: <http://www.ssb.no/omssb/sr/>.

**List of the key data producers other than NSI (including information on their contribution to Community statistics);**

Those agencies which so far produce statistics directly linked to European legal requirements are:

**Directorate of Fisheries:** responsible for delivering data related to several legal acts to Fishery statistics.

**NIFU STEP** (research institute for studies in innovation, research, and education): responsible for collecting in collaboration with Statistics Norway, data related to legal act in the field of science and technology

**NILF** (Norwegian Agricultural Economics Research Institute): responsible for compiling and delivering data related to legal act on economic accounts for agriculture.

**AVINOR:** responsible for compiling and delivering data according to legal act on air transport. As a result of the present review this task is considered transferred to Statistics Norway.

Furthermore there are several agencies that are producing data and statistics that is or can be of interest for the production of statistics based on European requirements. Some of the most important, and which also have been reviewed in relation to Code of practice, are:

**NAV** (The Norwegian Labour and Welfare administration): produces data related to different areas such as health, social care and the labour market.

**Norwegian Institute of Public Health:** compiles and disseminates a lot of health related data and statistics.

**Norwegian Directorate of Immigration:** compiles and disseminates statistics based on registrations reflecting and supporting the administration of immigration laws and procedures.

**Brief summary of main action lines towards system-wide implementation of the Code of Practice (including on how the compliance status has been established (self-assessments/other reviews/ etc.)).**

The review process started with a meeting in the Statistics Council informing about the intention of reviewing those agencies that for the moment delivered data to Eurostat (the four mentioned above) and asking others to volunteer, especially if they might be delivering data in future, based on existing or new legislation. The result was that four agencies asked for a review, but one has dropped out and thus the remaining three were those mentioned above.

These seven institutions were sent a slightly shortened and adapted version of the self-assessment questionnaire as used for the NSI's and were informed that a filled out questionnaire would be used as a basis for a meeting with two representatives from Statistics Norway. In the meeting the self-assessment

was discussed and some specific issues were identified and action points agreed upon, both for follow up by Statistics Norway and by the agency in order to approach compliance.

Both the agencies and Statistics Norway considered this process as useful in identifying issues and improvement actions.

First of all it is necessary to clarify the legal framework for some of the present producers of national statistics in order to more clearly identify what statistical products should be considered as official statistics. Thus there is need either to extend the scope of the statistical law and/or establish a clear professional framework for the production of official statistics in agencies outside Statistics Norway. This will provide a clearer basis both for the professional independence of statistics, mandate for collection statistical data, confidential treatment of statistical data and harmonised dissemination of statistical data.

Furthermore, it is intended to improve the cooperation on training and the exchange of best practice to reach a more common level of statistical competences and to improve and harmonise quality management, statistical confidentiality treatment and dissemination practises.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE OVERALL COMPLIANCE LEVEL OF NATIONAL KEY DATA PRODUCERS

Overall compliance level with the Code of Practice  
Country: Norway \_\_\_\_\_

Only principles 1 – 6 and 15 are commented on, partly as the self-assessment of the agencies was relatively fragmentary for the other principles, and the other principles are also relatively irrelevant for most agencies as the statistics produced is based on administrative data.

### **Principle 1,** *Professional independence*

In general, most agencies strive to maintain the professional independence of statistical operations, but there are differences in the way statistical work is organised and thus also the degree of independence of the head of the statistical unit. This issue is linked to the lack of a common framework for official statistics, as well as the units' mandate within the respective agencies. Most agencies have agreed action plans to improve the situation, for instance for handling misuse/misinterpretation of statistical information.

### **Principle 2,** *Mandate for data collection*

Those agencies that have administrative tasks normally have a legal basis for the collection of administrative data and thus also produce statistics as a by-product of the administrative activity. None of the seven agencies can at present use the Statistical law for the collection of pure statistical data, and actually some agencies have no legal basis at all for their statistical data collection. This is an unsatisfactory situation that has to be followed up.

### **Principle 3,** *Adequacy of resources*

The number of staff linked to the production of statistics varies between the agencies, from 1-2 to around 25 work years. In general the available resources were considered to be sufficient for the production of regular statistics, but did not always cover well the work to document and develop these statistics. The competence level in relation to statistical work also varies and there was a general interest in improved cooperation on training activities.

### **Principle 4,** *Quality commitment*

The level of quality commitment varies between the agencies from those using EFQM or other quality tools and having a separate quality manager to those lacking any systematic quality work. Most agencies will have to address this principle more explicitly in relation to the statistics produced, and therefore exchange of good practices and experiences is planned both in the Statistics council and possibly through separate seminars. One issue is the lack of documentation and some will perform self-assessment using DESAP.

### **Principle 5,** *Statistical confidentiality*

For data collected on the basis of specific administrative laws there might be specific rules governing confidentiality, and all such data sets are subject to regulations set in accordance with the legislation on data protection. Some agencies aim to follow the principles of the statistical law when handling

statistical information. In general there is a need to clarify and harmonise the confidentiality rules for handling statistical data across different agencies. It is especially necessary to develop common rules and procedures for providing access to micro-data from researchers and other users, and to make these rules publicly available.

**Principle 6,**  
*Impartiality and objectivity*

The level of compliance with this principle varies across agencies in line with the degree of professional independence and the organisation of the statistical function. In some agencies the statistical releases have a clear release calendar and are limited to statistical tables and short factual statements, whereas in other agencies there is no clear release policy. Most agencies will need to make improvements in this area, especially to ensure equal access to statistical data and a more transparent dissemination policy (pre-release access). Common rules for handling errors in published statistics should also be improved.

**Principle 7,**  
*Sound methodology*

**Principle 8,**  
*Appropriate statistical procedures*

**Principle 9**  
*Non-excessive burden on respondents*

**Principle 10,**  
*Cost effectiveness*

**Principle 11,**  
*Relevance*

**Principle 12,**  
*Accuracy and reliability*

**Principle 13,**  
*Timeliness and punctuality*

**Principle 14,**  
*Coherence and comparability*

**Principle 15,**  
*Accessibility and clarity*

The dissemination procedures vary considerably between agencies; some agencies have a well documented user oriented statistical data base, whereas others only produce standard tables in pdf or excel format, with limited documentation. Thus most agencies foresee making improvements, and there is also a call for increased cooperation and exchange of best practices. The topic will be addressed further in the Statistics council.