

# **PEER REVIEWERS' RECOMMENDATIONS AND STATISTICS SWEDEN'S IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

## Peer reviewer's recommendations and improvement actions in response to the recommendations

### *Role of Consumer Price Index and Construction Index Boards (Chapter 4.2.1)*

1. ***Ordinance (2007:762) with the Directives for Statistics Sweden should be amended so that the Boards for the Consumer Price Index and the Construction Index have only an advisory role. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 1)***

#### **Current situation:**

The Boards of the Consumer Price Index and the Construction Index are regulated in the Ordinance (2007:762) with Directives for Statistics Sweden. The Ordinance states that the boards discuss and decide on issues of principle relating to the index calculations.

#### **Improvement action 1 *Initiate the revision process with the Government***

Statistics Sweden will initiate the process of revising the Ordinance by opening a discussion with the Swedish government in the first half of 2015.

#### **Timeline:**

First half of 2015

***Improved governance and strategic focus for the National Statistical System (NSS) (Chapter 4.2.2)***

***2. The definition and the formal mechanisms for the practical implementation of the concept 'Official statistics' should be reviewed and clarified, particularly in relation to the other concepts of European and national/governmental statistics. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 1, 2, 4, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15)***

**Current situation:**

Official statistics are currently regulated in the Official Statistics Act (2001:99). The Act states that official statistics shall exist for public information, investigations and research, and should be identified by the official statistics symbol. The areas where official statistics are to exist are outlined in the Official Statistics Ordinance (2001:100). The statistical authorities decide themselves on which statistics to be made official statistics according to their areas of responsibility in the Ordinance. The Council of Official Statistics has established guidelines for the content and scope of the official statistics in order to assist statistical authorities in defining which statistics should be made official.

**Improvement action 2.1 *Open discussions with the Government***

In order to review and clarify the definition and the formal mechanisms for the practical implementation of the concept 'Official statistics', Statistics Sweden will open a discussion with the Swedish government in the first half of 2015.

**Timeline:**

First half of 2015

**Improvement action 2.2 *Discussion in the Council of Official Statistics***

The Council of Official Statistics will also have a discussion regarding the current concept of "official statistics" with an aim to identifying the need to better define and clarify the concept. The discussion should take place by the end of 2015.

**Timeline:**

End of 2015

**3. *Standard mechanisms and procedures should be put in place to review the quality of official statistics and thus certify whether the different products comply with the label "Official Statistics of Sweden". (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15)***

**Current situation:**

In December 2013 quality criteria were added to the law on official statistics in Sweden. The law does not include provisions about how to implement or review the quality criteria. The Official Statistics Ordinance however provides Statistics Sweden with the mandate to issue further regulations regarding the mechanisms and procedures for implementing the quality criteria.

**Improvement action 3 *Discussion with the Council of Official Statistics***

Statistics Sweden will discuss with the Council of Official Statistics the provisions in the legislative basis in light of Recommendation 3 by the end of 2015.

**Timeline:**

End of 2015

**4. *The structure and legal basis of the current national statistical system, with many legally mandated and independent small statistical authorities with limited statistical resources, should be reviewed in order to promote greater planning and coordination. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 1, 5, 10, 14, 15)***

**Current situation:**

The structure of the current NSS is defined primarily in the Official Statistics Ordinance and the Ordinance with Directives for Statistics Sweden, where coordination is outlined. No provisions relating to planning are included in these legal bases. There is currently no function for planning for the overall statistical system.

**Improvement action 4 *Open discussions with the Government***

In order to identify the need to review the structure and legal basis of the national statistical system with regard to promoting greater planning and coordination, Statistics Sweden will open a discussion with the Swedish government in the first half of 2015.

**Timeline:**

First half of 2015

**5. *Authorities and mechanisms to develop national coordinated plans and strategies for official statistics, including evaluation and follow up, should be put in place. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 10, 11, 14, 15)***

**Current situation:**

Statistics Sweden has a mandate to coordinate the NSS, as outlined in the Ordinance with Directives for Statistics Sweden. However the Ordinance does not include provisions for developing a national plan or strategy. Each statistical authority plans its statistical activities on the basis of users' needs and reports this to the Council of Official Statistics in the publishing plan, the annual report and to meetings of the Council.

**Improvement action 5 *Open discussions with the Government***

In order to identify the need for authorities and mechanisms to develop national coordinated plans and strategies for official statistics, Statistics Sweden will open a discussion with the Swedish government in the first half of 2015.

**Timeline:**

First half of 2015

**6. *Formal and practical mechanisms should be put in place in order to ensure more efficient usage of existing tools and methodologies developed and available within Statistics Sweden or within other authorities. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 7, 8, 10, 15)***

**Current situation:**

Statistics Sweden currently provides other statistical authorities with its tools and methodologies on a case by case basis. Existing tools and methodologies are discussed in the working group on methods and quality under the Council of Official Statistics.

**Improvement action 6 *Statistics Sweden internal discussions***

Statistics Sweden is reviewing the formal (legal) and practical mechanisms for the availability and dissemination of the existing tools and methodologies for use by other statistical authorities. Statistics Sweden has identified a number of tools that can be made available to other authorities and will develop plans for making these available during 2015. Once a mechanism for making tools and methodologies available has been established, other authorities will be encouraged to share their tools and methodologies in the same way. The suggestion is to use the current NSS Extranet.

**Timeline:**

By the end of 2015

**7. *An in-depth review of the whole system should be undertaken in order to assess the use of best practice quality procedures. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 4, 7, 8)***

**Current situation:**

An in-depth review of the system of official statistics was carried out in 2012. The National Audit Office subsequently initiated an in-depth review of the coordination of the system in order to assess the use of best practice quality procedures in 2014/2015. The National Audit Office review will be published and disseminated in March 2015.

**Improvement action 7 *Open discussions with the Government***

The in-depth review of the system with regard to quality will be published in March 2015. Following this, Statistics Sweden will open discussions with the Government regarding the recommendations from the review on the use of best practice quality procedures.

**Timeline:**

First half of 2015

**8. *A methodological framework, based on the Statistics Sweden model, should be developed for application throughout the national statistical system. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 7, 8)***

**Current situation:**

Each statistical authority in Sweden has its own organisation and frameworks. Statistical activities in most authorities (apart from Statistics Sweden) comprise a small part of their overall activities and any statistical framework should fit in with their organisational structure. Thus it is not certain that Statistics Sweden's model or indeed any standardised model would fit the needs of all authorities. However this has not been discussed.

**Improvement action 8 *Discussion in Council of Official Statistics***

The Council of Official Statistics will have a discussion in order to identify the possibilities for the development and implementation of a common methodological framework which could be applied throughout the national statistical system, taking into account the independent and diverse nature of Sweden's governmental authorities. The discussion should take place by the end of 2015.

**Timeline:**

By end of 2015

9. ***An institutional framework and tools should be developed to universally plan and monitor the quality of the statistical production process, and to ensure that product quality is regularly monitored, assessed, and documented. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 4, 7, 8)***

**Current situation:**

The Regulations issued by Statistics Sweden on official statistics require that all official statistics products have a quality declaration, outlining product quality. In 2014 only 3% of all official statistics did not have such a declaration. The Council of Official Statistics monitors the existence of these declarations but there is no function or mandate to assess or review these. Similarly there is no function to monitor or assess the quality of statistical production process for all official statistics.

**Improvement action 9.1 *Open discussions with the Government***

In order to identify the need and possibilities of developing an institutional framework and tools to plan and monitor process and product quality, Statistics Sweden will open a discussion with the Swedish government in the first half of 2015.

**Timeline:**

First half of 2015

**Improvement action 9.2 *Discussion in Council of Official Statistics***

The Council of Official Statistics will have a discussion in order to identify whether such a framework and tools could be implemented across the national statistical system. The discussion should take place by the end of 2015.

**Timeline:**

End of 2015

**10. Procedures and mechanisms should be enhanced to enable the transfer of skills and methods between the Swedish statistical authorities, for instance by increased possibilities for staff rotation and common training courses. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 7, 8, 10)**

**Current situation:**

The Council of Official Statistics has a mandate to promote skills development and exchange of experiences and methods among the statistical authorities. The Council does this through open seminars, workshops, working groups and the annual conference, which had an attendance in 2014 of 160 staff from all authorities. However there is not currently any formalised structure or discussions on a strategic level.

**Improvement action 10 *Discussion in Council of Official Statistics***

In 2014 a meeting between the statistical heads of the statistical authorities was held, with the specific purpose of discussing resources, staff issues and skills development. Statistics Sweden proposes that a discussion take place as part of this annual meeting of statistical heads, on the needs of the statistical authorities with regard to the transfer of skills and methods, focusing on possibilities for staff rotation and training courses. The next meeting is planned for August 2015.

**Timeline:**

Annually as of August 2015

**11. The statistical legislation should be amended in order to facilitate the greater use of administrative registers for statistical purposes including: clarifying the right of all statistical authorities to be informed about the development of the registers, and their ability to influence the content of the registers. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 9, 10)**

**Current situation:**

Sweden has a wealth of administrative data and a long tradition of using administrative registers for producing the official statistics. The Official Statistics Act outlines the requirement that statistical authorities should use existing data sources (including registers) in advance of starting new data collections, and that authorities are obliged to provide information necessary for producing the official statistics and European statistics. However this is not specified further. The Ordinance with Instructions for Statistics Sweden includes a list of the most important registers that Statistics Sweden may use for producing the official statistics. There is no provision relating to the ability to influence the content of registers.

**Improvement action 11 *Open discussions with the Government***

Statistics Sweden will open a discussion with the Swedish government in the first half of 2015 regarding the recommendation to amend the statistical legislation with regard to the information about and influence on administrative registers that are used for statistical purposes.

**Timeline:**

First half of 2015



12. **Greater efforts should be made to ensure that all statistical authorities are in a position to use more cost-effective data collection methods such as electronic questionnaires and web forms. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 7, 8, 9, 10, 15)**

**Current situation:**

Electronic data collection is widely available to all statistical authorities and is applied where it is considered cost-effective and/or improves quality. However, electronic data collection is not always appropriate, given the characteristics of the survey and the data providers. Information about suitable data collection modes are shared within the statistical system through seminars and conferences.

**Improvement action 12 *Discussion in Council of Official Statistics***

The Council of Official Statistics will have a discussion regarding the statistical authorities' possibilities to use cost-effective data collection methods. The discussion should take place by the end of 2015.

**Timeline:**

By the end of 2015.

**A high quality customer focused service for users of official statistics (Chapter 4.2.3)**

13. ***Statistics Sweden should ensure that there is greater transparency around, and follow-up of the work of its various user councils and groups. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 4, 11)***

**Current situation:**

There are currently 9 user councils at Statistics Sweden. Information about these is published on Statistics Sweden's website to ensure transparency. However there is currently no formalised routine for follow-up and feedback from these councils.

**Improvement action 13 *Statistics Sweden internal investigation***

Statistics Sweden plan for an investigation during 2015 concerning transparency around, and follow-up of, the work of its various user councils and groups. The investigation will be reported by the end of 2015.

**Timeline:**

End of 2015

14. ***User consultations for the whole Swedish statistical system should be reviewed to ensure greater coordination between statistical areas and to support the balancing and the development of the statistical system as a whole. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 4, 11)***

**Current situation:**

Many statistical authorities (and Statistics Sweden) have formal user consultation procedures in their respective statistical areas, in order to identify priorities and develop plans in each statistical area. There is currently no user consultation for the whole statistical system.

**Improvement action 14 *Discussion in Council of Official Statistics***

The Council of Official Statistics will have a discussion concerning the cost and benefits for user consultations for the whole system, and how such a consultation could be organised. The discussion should take place by the end of 2015.

**Timeline:**

End of 2015

**15. *Wide ranging user satisfaction surveys should be conducted on a regular basis covering all official statistics. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 4, 11)***

**Current situation:**

Statistics Sweden carries out a range of user satisfaction surveys, related to its larger surveys and to the public opinion of Statistics Sweden. No overall wide-ranging survey for the whole statistical system exists.

**Improvement action 15 *Discussion in Council of Official Statistics***

The Council of Official Statistics will have a discussion concerning cost and benefits for user satisfaction surveys covering all official statistics. The discussion should take place by the end of 2015.

**Timeline:**

By end of 2015

**16. *A more user-oriented solution (for example, through a common portal with full functionality) for handling and disseminating all official statistics should be established, including common rules for the production of tables and graphs and the greater use of English. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 10, 11, 15)***

**Current situation:**

According to the statistical legislation, official statistics should be made available via an electronic network. This network is achieved by linking to the relevant statistics from Statistics Sweden's website. The Council of Official Statistics has also established guidelines for electronic publishing to assist statistical authorities in producing tables and graphs. There is a regulation stating that all official statistics should at least provide table headings and a word list in English.

**Improvement action 16**

The Council of Official Statistics will have a discussion in order to identify the various solutions to improve the dissemination of official statistics. The working group for availability of official statistics will have a discussion during 2015.

**Timeline:**

By end of 2015

**17. *Statistics Sweden should ensure that its replacement for the Annual Statistical Yearbook will serve as a consolidated source of key statistical data on all aspects of Sweden and its people. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principles 11, 15)***

**Current situation:**

Statistics Sweden has made a decision in 2014 to discontinue its Annual Statistical Yearbook in favour of more modern web-based dissemination for statistical data. The replacement for the Annual Statistical Yearbook, "Sweden in figures", will be made available for the first time in 2015. The material being developed will be gradually expanded and developed in order to provide a comprehensive overview of Swedish society, based on data in Sweden's Statistical Database.

The aim of "Sweden in figures" is to provide key statistical data about Sweden according to the needs of users. "Sweden in figures" is not the only source of data about Sweden; key figures are already published on Statistics Sweden's website (based on data from all statistical authorities). The website is seen, both by users and producers, as the most important source for key statistical data today.

**Improvement action 17 *Statistics Sweden internal activities***

Statistics Sweden will present the replacement for the Annual Statistics Yearbook in 2015 as a consolidated source of key statistical data on all aspects of Sweden and its people.

**Timeline:**

By the end of 2015

**18. *Procedures should be put in place to provide an opportunity for greater engagement with researchers to address their concerns in regard to access to micro-data and pricing. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 15)***

**Current situation:**

The Swedish government has recently published its inquiry into data provision to researchers, *SOU 2014:45 Unik kunskap genom registerforskning* (<http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/18300/a/242912>). Statistics Sweden and the other statistical authorities are currently drafting formal responses to this inquiry.

**Improvement action 18 *Discussion in Council of Official Statistics***

The Council of Official Statistics will have a discussion regarding greater engagement with researchers to address their concerns in regard to access to micro-data and pricing. This will take place after the government has reacted to the proposals from the recent government inquiry. The discussion should take place by the end of 2015.

**Timeline:**

By end of 2015