

## Introduction

The Annual Report 2008 for the research activities of Statistics Norway presents the main fields of research with a complete listing of publications and staff. Research activities reported here takes place in the Research Departments and the Statistical Methods and Standards Unit which administratively is currently part of the Department of ITC and Methods in Statistics Norway.

2008 was a productive year for research in Statistics Norway. Several of our younger employees finalized their Ph.D and we increased the number of international journal publications quite a bit. This is in line with the recommendations we received from the research council evaluation panel a year or so ago. We aim to strengthen our international cooperation networking activities in the years ahead.

In terms of economic development 2008 turned out to be an extremely turbulent year. The Norwegian economy entered 2008 with very low unemployment and with a history of very high growth. Due to immigration the population increased a lot but also fertility rates have picked up in recent years and are now close to reproduction levels. However, 2008 ended with a gloomier outlook. Although Norway did not suffer significantly negative growth rates in the fourth quarter, our forecasts for 2009 year suggest that Norway is far from immune to the international financial crisis. Due to Norway's production structure Norway has suffered a very large terms of trade loss not only due to our large petroleum sector but also because of substantial production of other staples or semi-manufactured goods. So while Norway may do well in terms of real growth our real disposable income will probably fall more than in most countries. But given the large surpluses on government budgets and the current account, Norway should be in a better position than many countries to conduct policies that will counteract the effect of the downturn.

Statistics Norway welcomes interest in our publications and activities in general. We are happy to provide information as well as publications to individuals and institutions. All in house publications such as Discussion Papers, Economic Survey, Reports and Statistical Analyses are available free at our website [www.ssb.no](http://www.ssb.no) (English site: [www.ssb.no/en](http://www.ssb.no/en)). Our research website (<http://www.ssb.no/english/research/>) is also updated with other information on the research activities at Statistics Norway.

Oslo, April 2009  
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