


**Statistics Norway**  
**Strategy**  
**2014–2017**

Statistics Norway



Statistisk sentralbyrå



**Statistics Norway** has the primary responsibility for preparing and disseminating official statistics on Norwegian society, and its core tasks are described in the Statistics Act. Statistics Norway shall map and prioritise the need for official statistics, take responsibility for coordinating official statistics that are compiled by government agencies, and have primary responsibility for the international statistical cooperation. Statistics Norway shall also develop statistical methodologies and use the statistics for analysis and research. Statistics Norway is one of the few international statistical agencies that have a dedicated research department, and the research department shall shed light on the development of society based on Statistics Norway's statistics. Statistics Norway shall also facilitate the supply of statistics for research and public planning.

Most of Statistics Norway's statistics are compiled based on data from two main sources: administrative registers and surveys. More and more information is obtained directly from businesses and local authorities' computer systems.

In addition to the provisions of the Statistics Act, Statistics Norway is also subject to the Personal Data Act and the Norwegian Data Protection Authority's control with regard to responsible handling of personal data. Individuals and businesses should be able to trust that the information they provide to Statistics Norway is not accessed by unauthorised parties and is not used for purposes other than those agreed in advance or required by law.

According to the Statistics Act, Statistics Norway is a professionally autonomous institution in terms of what statistics it can produce. Statistics Norway is also subject to the overarching guidelines and the financial framework set for Statistics Norway's activities by the government and the Norwegian parliament. Statistics Norway has two sources of funding; about two-thirds of the activities are financed through a grant from the national budget, while a third is covered through revenues from user-financed assignments. The customers are mainly government agencies.

As a result of the EEA Agreement, Norway is part of the European Statistical System (ESS), which is a partnership between Eurostat (the EU's statistical authority) and the national statistical agencies in the EU and EFTA countries.

## Preface

Statistics Norway's strategy 2014-2017 sets the framework and objectives for the years ahead. Users are constantly placing higher demands on the extent, quality and accessibility of statistics and the statistics must be adapted in line with changes in the users' needs.

The strategy will contribute to changes in how activities are conducted. These changes will ensure that we carry out our responsibilities to society in a satisfactory manner and within the applicable financial framework. The changes entail stricter priorities and a greater focus on core tasks, as well as more cost-effective

production and organisation. This requires solution-oriented, motivated and competent employees and managers.

The strategy will be further broken down into sub-strategies and activity plans in order to safeguard Statistics Norway's position as society's leading supplier of facts. We aim to provide statistics that give the most accurate and comprehensive picture of Norwegian society. Statistics Norway shall also give added value to the statistics through high-quality research and analysis work.

Oslo, 26 february 2014

Morten Reymert  
*Chair of the Board*

Hans Henrik Scheel  
*Director General*

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# Statistics and analyses for the benefit of society

## An independent factual basis

Statistics Norway is the central body responsible for covering the need for statistics on Norwegian society. Official statistics are the nation's shared factual basis and are essential for a living democracy. Statistics are vital to effective planning, evaluation, debate and research. Official statistics are a public good that everyone shall have equal access to.

## Framework

The Statistics Act sets the formal framework for all Norwegian official statistics and gives Statistics Norway the authority to determine the content of its own statistics and analyses. Statistics Norway decides what to publish and when and how this will happen. The Statistics Act provides the professional autonomy that is

necessary in order to maintain society's confidence in official statistics.

Society's needs are of central importance to the content of the statistics. The production of statistics is increasingly governed by EU legislation through the EEA Agreement.

Norway has an obligation to adhere to the European Statistics Code of Practice, which sets out principles for how the statistics should be compiled and disseminated.

Technological developments entail both opportunities and challenges. In order to ensure effective processing and dissemination of statistics, it is necessary to develop excellent IT tools and have access to the right expertise.

## Our objectives

1. Statistics Norway shall be society's leading supplier of facts
2. The statistics shall meet the needs of users
3. Relevant research and analysis shall enhance the value of statistics
4. Statistics Norway shall participate in the international cooperation to improve statistics
5. Statistics Norway shall have easy access to data sources
6. Statistics Norway shall be an effective and knowledge-based organisation

**Framework**

- The Statistics Act and associated regulations
- Obligations under the EEA Agreement and other international obligations
- National and international quality requirements
- The Norwegian parliament's budget allocation and letters of allocation from the Ministry of Finance

**Key developments**

- Increasing globalisation with financial activities across country borders and demographic changes
- Growing demand for new statistics in new areas
- New technology for collecting data and disseminating statistics
- New data sources
- Changing attitudes to data protection
- Increased competition in the statistics market

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# 1. Leading supplier of facts

## Focus on core tasks

Statistics Norway is the central body responsible for compiling and disseminating Norwegian official statistics, and is also responsible for the effective production of such statistics. Statistics Norway must clearly define and prioritise these core tasks. Our performance is judged on how we solve the core tasks.

The user-financed assignments, i.e. statistics and research financed by external customers, are subject to the same quality requirements as other assignments and shall complement other statistics and research. We will limit the extent of assignments where it is not feasible to produce dedicated statistics.

## Clear and relevant

Statistics Norway shall ensure that data is independent and impartial, and of a high quality. Our statistics and analyses are important for debate, research and planning in both the public and private sectors, and must therefore portray the main features of the development of society. This shall form the basis of all of our statistics, research and information sharing.

## Professionally autonomous, balanced and transparent

Professional autonomy from authorities and interest groups generates trust and credibility

in official statistics. Statistics Norway does not promote political views. Dissemination of statistics, analyses and research shall be balanced, accurate and comprehensive. This requires good internal coordination and transparency in relation to methods, decisions and results.

## Coordination and quality assurance

Statistics Norway is responsible for coordinating all official statistics in Norway and thereby clarifying the division of labour between Statistics Norway and other producers of official statistics. The quality requirements should be applied to all official statistics. We will therefore clarify the term “official statistics”.

The Statistics Council – which is an advisory body for statistics producers in Norway – is a key contributor in the effort to coordinate and safeguard quality requirements.

## An outstanding reputation

The key element of Statistics Norway’s reputation is the quality of the statistics. Parties providing data for statistical purposes shall be assured that confidentiality is maintained, and that private information is not compromised. A good reputation will ensure a higher quality of data collected and high participation in our surveys, and is therefore a prerequisite for us fulfilling our role in society.

**We shall:**

- define and focus our activities on the core tasks
- carry out user-financed assignments that are useful for society and that support our core tasks
- communicate in a way that supports Statistics Norway's credibility
- use new communication platforms and increase the share of digital publications
- produce statistics that are comparable at an international level
- define the term "official statistics"
- clarify the division of labour between Statistics Norway and other statistics producers
- develop statistics on the public sector, while limiting our production of very detailed information suitable only for the governance of a specific sector

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## 2. Statistics to meet user needs

### **A statistics portfolio adapted to user needs**

Statistics shall provide information on society, and the interactions and developments therein. Isolated findings are more interesting when they are put into context.

User needs and demands change in line with social development, and Statistics Norway needs to produce the statistics that are most beneficial. This requires us to examine, analyse and prioritise which areas we should focus on. Statistics Norway shall develop new statistics that shed light on new issues and update existing statistical areas, whilst also reducing the extent of statistics that are less important. Statistics Norway shall guide users in how to understand and interpret the statistics.

### **High-quality statistics**

The statistics shall be relevant, accurate, reliable, timely, punctual, coherent, comparable, accessible and clear.

Statistics Norway's quality work is based on the European Statistics Code of Practice. These guidelines set out quality requirements for institutions, processes and statistical products.

### **Totality and correlation**

As a coordinator of official statistics, Statistics Norway has a special responsibility to ensure coherence between different aspects of the statistics.



**We shall:**

- analyse user needs through user surveys and advisory committees
- stimulate the ongoing renewal of the statistics portfolio
- display the quality in individual statistics
- ensure easy access to data and statistics for our users
- adapt communication to prioritised and defined user groups and further develop ssb.no as the main dissemination platform
- clarify how globalisation will affect and change Statistics Norway's data collection and production
- use optimal statistical methodologies aimed at ensuring efficiency and quality
- ensure consistent terminology and classifications in Statistics Norway and with other statistics producers

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### **3. Relevant research and analysis enhance the value of statistics**

#### **User-relevant analyses in different areas**

Statistics Norway's analyses of the statistics shall portray society and provide a better understanding of the statistics. Our own analyses shall improve the statistics. We will develop the analysis groups and perform analyses in areas where further analysis is demanded by users.

#### **Research that helps improve statistics**

Statistics Norway's research shall give further insight into society and its development, and help improve the quality of statistics. The research shall be of a high quality, long-term and will focus on selected areas.

Systematic cooperation between statistics and research shall benefit the statistical work.

#### **User-relevant and research-based model portfolio**

Statistics Norway will prioritise the maintenance and development of economic and demographic models that can be used in social planning by the Norwegian parliament and ministries, among others.

The models shall collectively provide a broad and detailed description of the Norwegian economy and population, and contribute to a better understanding of key correlations. The models can also be used for projections and analyses of changes in economic policy. The models shall be research-based, and Statistics Norway shall strengthen macroeconomic research as part of the effort to improve the model and analysis tools.

#### **Effective lending of microdata for external research and analysis**

Statistics Norway's data is used extensively by researchers outside Statistics Norway. Statistics Norway therefore needs to have efficient systems for publishing statistics and lending microdata, whereby costs remain low and delivery times remain as short as possible.

### **We shall:**

- identify areas where extended analyses give more insight, increase the scope of the analyses and link statistics
- define and compare correlations in the statistics, both at a national and international level
- assure the quality of research through scientific publications
- carry out research based on Statistics Norway's data
- develop our own economic models that cover key areas of society, particularly within public economics
- strengthen macroeconomic research

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## 4. International cooperation to improve statistics

### Active international role

Globalisation and increasing European integration are the driving forces behind the need for more comparable statistics across national borders. Norway shall develop, produce and report statistics in line with international guidelines, standards and classifications.

The extensive and intensive international cooperation in the field of statistics has helped improve the quality of, and use of, Norwegian statistics. International comparability adds significant value to national statistics.

Statistics Norway is active in international forums. Through networking, competent statisticians and a solid professional foundation, we are influencing the development of international statistics in a number of areas.

Statistics Norway shall influence the scope and content of the guidelines and requirements, so that these are, to the degree possible, adapted to Norwegian conditions. We will continue to be a driving force internationally and produce internationally comparable statistics of a high quality.

### Development cooperation shall build expertise and capacity in official statistics in partner countries

Statistics Norway's development cooperation shall be in line with Norwegian foreign policy. Through broad and long-term institutional cooperation, Statistics Norway shall contribute to the development of sustainable national statistical systems in developing countries and newly-industrialised countries.

Efforts will be concentrated on selected countries where we consider the conditions to be well suited for developing the statistical systems.

Statistics Norway shall make demands on partner countries in order to ensure ownership and commitment, whereby official statistics become an integral part of decision-making and policy development in these countries.



**We shall:**

- cooperate with and learn from other statistical agencies
- contribute to the development of international statistics
- influence and implement international requirements for the statistics
- take part in the cooperation in line with Norwegian foreign policy
- establish binding and long-term institutional cooperation for developing national statistical systems in developing countries
- increase the benefits of the development cooperation in the partner countries within the current framework
- define success criteria and systematically follow up aid projects

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## 5. Easy access to data sources

### **Easy access to data sources and registers of a high quality**

In order for the statistics to meet society's demands, Statistics Norway is dependent on data sources being of a high quality. Statistics Norway aims to further develop the cooperation with owners of administrative registers. Daily activities leave vast amounts of digital footprints, which, when employing the right methods and tools, can be used to create high-quality statistics. Exploiting new data sources is groundbreaking work that Statistics Norway shall be involved in.

### **High participation in surveys**

Although the participation in surveys has diminished in recent years, they are still an important source of data. Lower response rates mean more uncertain statistics. Statistics Norway shall therefore work to increase participation in its surveys. In addition, we will use supplementary technology and methods.

Statistics Norway also needs to consider increasing the use of mandatory surveys and different ways of rewarding respondents.

### **Adapted response burden**

Norwegian official statistics are largely based on data from government agencies' registers. Statistics Norway is working to increase electronic coordination in order to minimise the response burden. This is being done through cooperation between the agencies for joint reporting, and by making it easier to reuse data. Simplification, an even distribution of the response burden and other incentives for respondents shall ensure the best possible quality of the data.

### **Data protection**

The population has great confidence in Statistics Norway and the statistics and analyses we produce. Trust is essential in order to ensure that data is delivered and that the statistics are used. Data collected for statistical purposes is treated under strict rules of confidentiality.



**We shall:**

- use new methods for data collection
- exploit new data sources and digital footprints
- further develop the cooperation with owners of administrative registers
- set a target response rate before a survey is conducted
- improve the communication with respondents
- consider different incentives in order to secure responses to surveys
- consider increasing the number of mandatory surveys in order to secure responses to surveys
- reduce and distribute the response burden evenly
- cooperate on access to international registers
- ensure responsible handling of data

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## 6. An effective and knowledge-based organisation

### **Competent employees who seek to make improvements**

Statistics Norway is a knowledge-based organisation that depends on the competence of its employees changing in line with developments in statistical products, technology and organisation. Statistics Norway shall attract solution-oriented, motivated and competent employees, who shall face challenges in their area of expertise and experience effective management and affable colleagues. All employees shall have the opportunity for professional and personal development, but are also expected to contribute to further developing their specialist area and the organisation.

### **Forward-looking and clear management**

Statistics Norway's management shall be strategic, target-oriented and change-oriented in order to respond to new demands for statistics and analyses. Managers in Statistics Norway shall implement the strategy, stimulate innovation and improvement, take overall responsibility, develop expertise and recognise the contribution of each employee. This requires managers who encourage cooperation, set specific goals and have the ability to carry the work through.

### **A good working environment**

A good working environment is crucial for Statistics Norway achieving its goals. In Statistics Norway, everyone assumes responsibility for their own and Statistics Norway's development, and helps create a good working environment. An important part of this effort is identifying and

acknowledging the individual's part in the organisation. Statistics Norway shall value employees who share knowledge with others and contribute to results.

### **Flexible organisation**

Statistics Norway will assess, on an ongoing basis, whether the organisation is adequate for solving existing and new tasks. Responsibility and authority shall follow the organisational hierarchy. Additionally, a strong emphasis shall be placed on cooperation across divisions and departments, including through formal projects. The need for flexibility and focus on core tasks means that Statistics Norway has to outsource some services and specialist expertise.

### **Standardised and efficient processes**

A more efficient operation will enable more statistical demands to be met within budget restraints. Statistics Norway shall have standardised work processes in order to reduce vulnerability and facilitate efficiency through continuous improvement. Excellent IT tools and the right IT skills are therefore essential. Development of efficient, robust and standardised production processes will thus require more investment in IT.

### **Structured data**

Statistics Norway's data is valuable to society and shall therefore be preserved and documented in order to facilitate reuse. An effective data structure is a prerequisite for efficient data collection and for efficient production and dissemination of statistics and analyses.



**We shall:**

- monitor employees' skills and increase the mobility of employees and managers
- develop managers' skills and evaluate regularly
- maintain sustainable arenas for knowledge through developing employees and targeted recruitment
- use the Lean methodology as a basis for efficiency and continuous improvement
- plan and manage projects efficiently
- develop systems that enable accurate descriptions of Statistics Norway's data and facilitate reuse
- utilise new technology
- develop effective tools that support all parts of the work processes
- develop new performance indicators that will ensure we achieve our strategic goals

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