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Statistics Norway

– an institution
that counts



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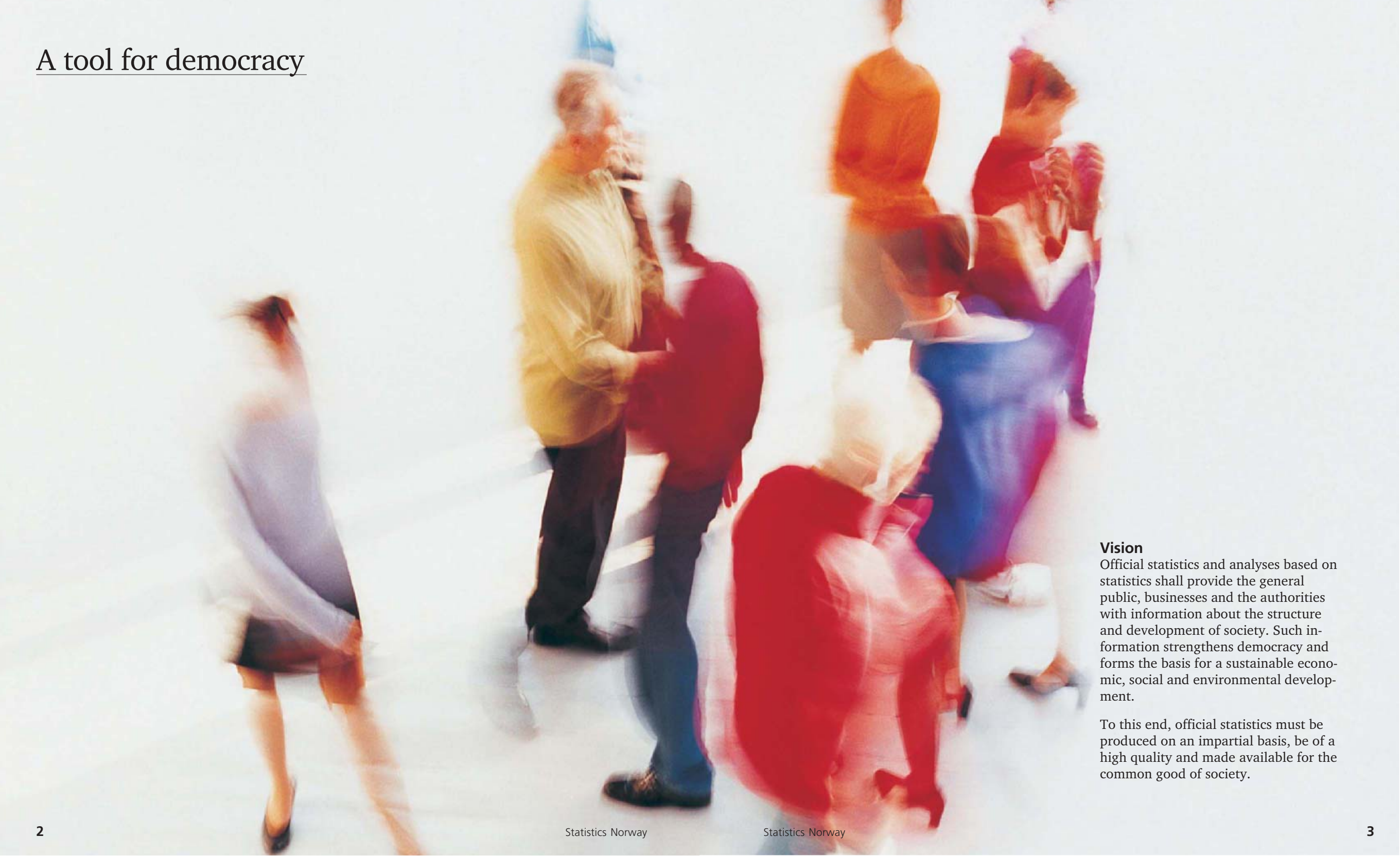
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A tool for democracy



Vision

Official statistics and analyses based on statistics shall provide the general public, businesses and the authorities with information about the structure and development of society. Such information strengthens democracy and forms the basis for a sustainable economic, social and environmental development.

To this end, official statistics must be produced on an impartial basis, be of a high quality and made available for the common good of society.

Statistics tell stories

Monitoring changes in society

Statistics Norway can be described as the memory of society. In its work, Statistics Norway mirrors Norway's population development, the state of the economy and business and industry. As the service industry grows, so does the need for more statistics on it, and with information and communication technology having an increasingly greater impact on our everyday lives we need to know more about how this affects society.

The media is among the most active users of Statistics Norway's statistics and analyses. On an average day, Statistics Norway is quoted in the media up to 30 times and the use of our figures increases every year. Sometimes the statistics are passed on to the readers more or less unedited and sometimes they are used as background material for news articles.

Random figures are not enough to describe a development or identify a correlation. That is where statistics come in. Statistics are important because they enable us to see the whole picture and not just the figures and to identify correlations and developments in society – between groups, across disciplines, over time, between places and beyond national borders.

Figures on the Norwegian population become more meaningful when we know what the population was 20 or 200 years ago. Likewise, statistics on municipal expenditure take on more meaning when we compare them with figures from neighbouring municipalities. Only by combining statistical information into a bigger picture can we get an understanding of the wider context and the complex processes at work in a modern society. That is why it makes sense for one national institution to be responsible for producing the official statistics and for organising the statistics and the different steps of the production chain.

Several Norwegian public institutions produce statistics but Statistics Norway is the central body responsible for collecting, analysing and disseminating official statistics. According to the Statistics Act of 1989, Statistics Norway has the power to decide what should form part of official statistics and is responsible for organising all of the official statistics in Norway.

Statistics Norway's role as an autonomous producer of statistics, as laid down in the Act, is particularly important where use of the statistics is dependent on trust.

Important and unbiased

Our users demand statistical information of a high quality. Our aim is that all statistics are relevant, up-to-date, accurate, comparable and coherent, available and documented, unbiased and produced efficiently. We shall achieve this whilst at all times complying with privacy laws.

Statistics from Statistics Norway will be of value to society and will help politicians and businesses make decisions and contribute to the public's understanding of society.

If statistical information is to be of any value, people must rely on it. The Norwegian population has great confidence in Statistics Norway and we work continuously to make the statistics and analyses more relevant and user friendly - both with regard to what and how statistical information is produced and published.

The ability to describe long-term trends at home and internationally is essential in today's society. To achieve this, the statistics must be founded on statistical standards that cover agreed definitions of terms, classifications and accounting systems. Such standards are often international. Statistics Norway is responsible for the Norwegian statistical standards.

The statistics are made available to everyone simultaneously. No one has priority over anyone else with regard to new statistics. This is an important principle in the dissemination of official statistics and underlines Statistics Norway's autonomous role. In the Advance Release Calendar on ssb.no the media and other users are informed of statistics releases four months in advance. Timeliness is important to Statistics Norway: less than 10 per cent of the statistics are released later than planned.

Statistics Norway produces statistics on

- Births and deaths
- Causes of death
- Child welfare
- Cohabitation
- Consumption
- Crime
- Educational institutions
- Elections
- Families
- Gender
- Health conditions
- Hospitals and psychiatric institutions
- Immigrants and refugees
- Kindergartens
- Labour market
- Living conditions
- Marriages, registered partnerships and divorces
- Media
- Migration
- Municipal health care
- Museums and libraries
- Patients
- Population
- Pupils, students and teachers
- Religious and philosophical communities
- Social care
- Social services and social security
- Time use
- Wages
- Working conditions
- Youth and children

The first population census in Norway was carried out in 1769. Back then the country's population was 724 000. Social and population statistics have become more comprehensive with each generation and today Statistics Norway produces statistics on living conditions, health, education, housing, consumption, culture, employment and income, in addition to population, births, immigration, marriages, migration and deaths.

Our social and population statistics offer up-to-date information on how the population changes (is there a looming wave of elderly inhabitants?), social structures (more people live alone), lifestyle (we spend more money on leisure and culture than we do on food), education levels (20 per cent of Norwegians have higher education) and the population's health (life expectancy is approximately 77 years for men and 82 years for women). The statistics and analyses portray what it is like to live in Norway today. As far as possible we compare our statistics with those of other countries (Japanese women live the longest).

Data on population statistics are usually collected from registers such as the Population Register, which the Directorate of Taxes is responsible for. Data are also collected from population and housing censuses and surveys.

The last census form

The most recent population and housing census was carried out on 3 November 2001. Population censuses have been carried out approximately every ten years since 1769. However, the 2001 census was different from previous years as it was combined with a residence address project for all flats in Norway. As a result, all dwellings now have their own unique address and an upgrade of the national register for the Ground Property, Address and Building Register (GAB) can take place.

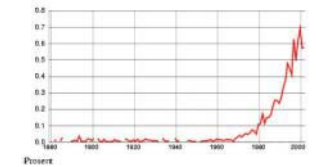
This means that in the future housing data can be retrieved directly from the GAB register. It will no longer be necessary to send census forms to Norwegian households. The end of an era!

Name Statistics - the most popular statistics on ssb.no

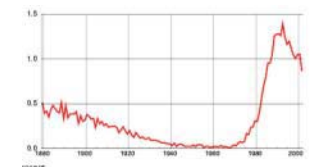
Statistics Norway's Name Statistics is the most visited page on ssb.no. It tells you how common your name is and how its popularity has varied since 1880. The service is based on data from the Population Register and is updated with new figures and Top Ten lists every January.

On ssb.no you can view graphs showing the popularity of first names over time.

Sunniva



Kristoffer



The air we breathe, the ground we walk

Statistics Norway produces statistics on

Agriculture and the environment
Emissions to air
Energy
Environmental economics
Land use
Nature and local environment
Noise
Resource accounts
Sewage and wastewater treatment
Waste
Water

In order to create a sustainable development society needs information about natural resources and the environment. Statistics Norway's statistics and analyses show the development in pollution, waste, emissions and the use of natural resources. In addition, Statistics Norway produces overviews of land use.

The purpose of statistics on the environment is to describe the situation today, changes that are taking place and measures that are being implemented. Although this is a relatively new subject, the statistical material is so comprehensive that we can publish complete accounts, e.g. on waste management and emissions to air broken down by municipality.

Does economic growth harm the environment?

As Statistics Norway produces statistics both on the environment and the economy, it is possible to explore whether economic growth leads to damage to the environment. Data from the national accounts and statistics on the environment provide detailed information on economic growth and emission patterns broken down by industry. So far the figures show that emissions have increased throughout the 1990s, albeit not as much as the economic growth.

Big waves, small ripples

Statistics Norway produces statistics on

Agriculture
 Balance of payments
 Bankruptcies
 Construction
 Consumer price index
 Consumption of goods and retail sales
 Development aid
 Electricity and electricity prices
 Employment and unemployment
 Existing buildings
 Exports and imports
 Financial enterprises
 Fishing and fish farming
 Forestry
 Holiday
 Hotels, camping and other accommodation
 Hunting
 Income
 Inheritance
 Livestock
 Manufacturing
 Marine casualties
 Municipal economy
 Oil and gas extraction
 Personal services
 Prices
 Public finance
 Purchasing power
 Research and development
 Restaurant industry
 Road traffic accidents
 Shares and securities
 Ships and ports
 Taxes and charges
 Tourism
 Transfer of properties
 Transport and communication
 Travel
 Work stoppages

Economic activity in Norway comprises a variety of players and industries. The economic development is influenced by several factors, such as price trends, interest rates, supply and demand. Statistics Norway describes the structure and development of each industry and publishes statistics on private and public sector framework conditions.

Economic development - both at the macro and micro level - is characterised by small, short-term movements and major, longer-term changes. Statistics Norway describes both. The short-term statistics, published monthly or quarterly, present the main developments in the last period. The annual structural statistics contain more detailed information broken down by industry, including figures on turnover, employment and number of businesses.

One example of short-term statistics is the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which shows the price development for consumer goods. The CPI is used to measure the price

development in Norway. An interactive service on ssb.no allows you to easily calculate the price growth from one period to another.

Structural statistics on wholesale and retail trade is an example of annual structural statistics providing detailed information on wholesale and retail trade activities.

The Central Register of Establishments and Enterprises

This register is the cornerstone of Statistics Norway's industry statistics. It contains all businesses in Norway. The Central Register of Establishments and Enterprises was created in 1957 and is used as a basis for statistical surveys in which businesses are natural variables. The register is a joint cooperation between Statistics Norway and the Central Coordinating Register for Legal Entities.



Keeping accounts for Norway

Describing a country's economy in a set of accounts is a demanding task and one that Statistics Norway has been responsible for since the Second World War. Today the national accounts are among our most important products. The national accounts describe most aspects of the Norwegian economy, and are thus an essential data source for macro-economic analyses. The national accounts are also useful for modelling economic policies.

Good statistics are essential in order to produce complete accounts and to provide detailed analyses of the relationships between different sectors of the Norwegian economy and the foreign market. In the national accounts figures from Statistics Norway's economic statistics and other sources are used and combined into a coherent set of accounts. The national accounts serve as an umbrella for Norway's economic statistics. To ensure that the national accounts are of a high quality, Statistics Norway's industry statistics are developed on an ongoing basis.

Updated figures from the national accounts are published quarterly.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is a measure of a country's total production of goods and services and is often used as an indicator of the economic development of a country. In Norway, Statistics Norway estimates the GDP.

Key figures in the Norwegian economy

Gross Domestic Product for Norway (NOK in 2002)

Consumption	1 000 bn
+ Investments	290 bn
+ Exports	630 bn
- Imports	420 bn
= GDP	1 500 bn

Satellite Accounts

Based on the national accounts, new types of accounts can be created which provide information on areas of particular relevance. These are known as satellite accounts. Examples of such accounts are environmental satellite accounts and tourism satellite accounts. Satellite accounts can also be used for other subjects that require more systematic analysis or new methods of analysis by combining statistics from various subjects, such as health, education and research and development.

Town and country

Norway's population of 4.5 million has 323 000 square kilometres of land at its disposal. Each individual and kilometre is different. This also applies to Norway's municipalities.

Statistics Norway publishes a broad selection of statistics broken down on county and municipal level, ranging from municipal activities, population, the environment, municipal economy and business and industry. Some of the statistics are produced at an even lower level, for instance smaller districts in the largest cities.

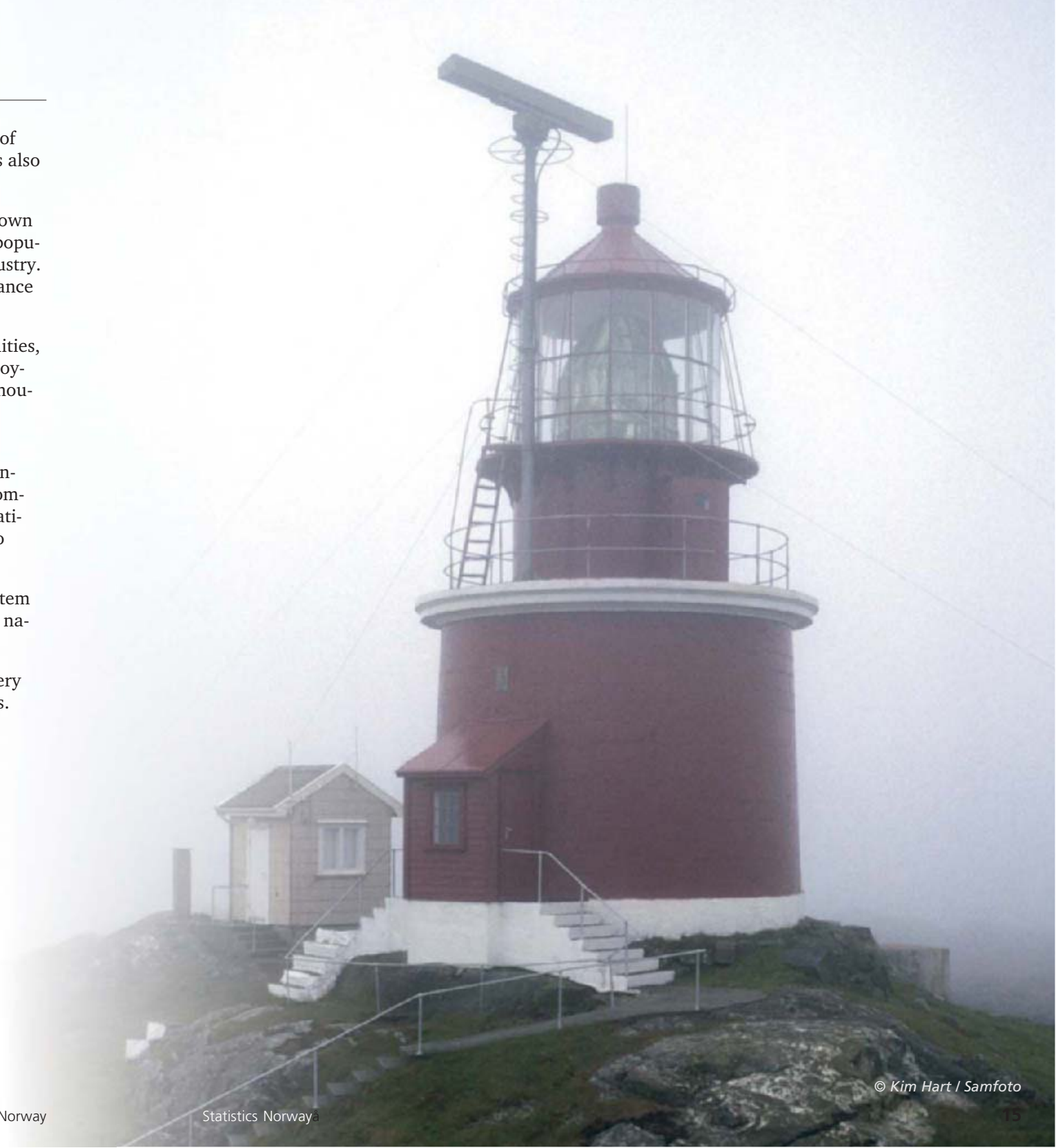
ssb.no provides separate pages for each of Norway's 434 municipalities, giving an overview of the population, kindergartens, schools, employment and income, health and social services, municipal economy, housing conditions and the environment.

KOSTRA

KOSTRA (an abbreviation for Municipality-State-Reporting) is an information system on municipal and county activities. It contains comprehensive data on activity areas ranging from the economy, education, health, culture, the environment, social services and housing to technical services and communication.

The figures show priorities, coverage and productivity, and the system enables comparisons between municipalities as well as county and national averages.

Provisional KOSTRA figures are published as early as 15 March every year, just ten weeks after the completion of the municipal accounts. Corrected figures, which have undergone thorough controls by the municipalities and Statistics Norway, are published on 15 June.



Using statistics to acquire new knowledge

Research objectives at Statistics Norway

- Contribute to further knowledge of Norwegian society through analysis of own statistics.
- Develop tools for analysis and policy development.
- Analyse and uncover weaknesses in order to strengthen the quality of the statistics.
- Develop tools and methods in order to support and increase the efficiency of statistics production.

Fortune-tellers

Four times a year, Statistics Norway publishes prognoses on how the Norwegian and international economy will develop in the years ahead. Estimates for unemployment, the interest rate and the growth in GDP, among other things, are presented.

Every three years, Statistics Norway presents estimated population figures broken down by municipality and for the country as a whole 50 years into the future. Life expectancy for various age groups and the expected composition of age groups are also presented.

Researchers from all over Norway utilise our statistics in their work. In addition, Statistics Norway's own researchers shed light on important aspects of Norwegian society by using the statistics in their research.

Statistics Norway's research is often undertaken in close collaboration with researchers at universities, colleges and other research institutes in Norway and abroad. National and international cooperation is essential to ensuring high quality research.

Main research areas

- Macro economic research, including empirical studies of the functioning and development of the Norwegian economy. The research is based on Statistics Norway's short-term statistics and national accounts data, and the development and use of econometric time series methods and models.
- Analyses of public finance and the main factors behind the development of public revenues and expenditure, such as tax income, transfers and demand for public services. Demographic conditions, participation in education and employment and the significance of various social security regulations are of great relevance to these analyses. The research also focuses on the behaviour of local government and their priorities between different service sectors and recipients.
- Micro economic research focuses on further development and the application of tax benefit models, analyses of consumer behaviour and the distributional effects of public intervention, and effects of changes in direct and indirect taxation. The functioning of the labour market and firm behaviour are covered through econometric analyses of Statistics Norway's micro data.
- Social and demographic research, where demographic development and changes in the population's economic and social living conditions are analysed. The research activities combine a micro-analytical approach focusing on demographic and socio-economic processes, with a macro level approach directed at describing changes in social and demographic structures.
- Research on energy and environmental issues, such as the environmental situation in Norway and the interaction between economic growth, energy consumption and the environment. The analyses also cover the development of national and international electricity and energy markets and look at how hydroelectric resources are affected. The global oil market, the European gas market and emissions of greenhouse gases are other areas of research.
- Statistical methods, including sampling methods and non-response problems, measuring errors and methods for estimating uncertainty in statistics, linking of register-based statistics and sampling statistics, editing methods, methods for seasonal adjustment and for questionnaire design for soft and hard copy.

Statistics from Statistics Norway increase in value when they are put into a wider context and used to understand, explain and predict developments in society.

Statistics Norway's own Act

The obligation to provide information and the right to impose compulsory fines

The Statistics Act gives Statistics Norway the right to impose an obligation to provide information. This means that businesses in receipt of a questionnaire from Statistics Norway are obliged to return it. This provision applies to most business and industry surveys. If the information requested has not been provided within the deadline, Statistics Norway may impose compulsory fines. Most business and industry surveys carry an obligation to provide information and the right to impose compulsory fines for those who do not comply.

Participation is voluntary for the majority of surveys aimed at individuals. In such surveys the obligation to provide information is only applied to surveys of particular importance, such as the Labour Force Survey. Compulsory fines are not imposed on individuals.

Statistics Norway has its own Act - the Statistics Act of 16 June 1989.

Pursuant to the Act, Statistics Norway shall:

- Identify and place in order of priority the needs for official statistics.
- Coordinate comprehensive statistics which are produced by administrative agencies.
- Develop statistical methods and apply statistics to analysis and research.
- Provide information for statistical use for research purposes and for public planning.
- Bear the main responsibility for international statistical cooperation

The Statistics Act states that Statistics Norway is a professionally autonomous institution placed under the superior guidelines and financial framework set out by the Government and Storting (the Norwegian parliament). This means that:

- Statistics Norway is responsible for the design of the total statistics product within the guidelines and budgets as set out by superior bodies.
- Statistics Norway determines which statistical methods shall be used in the production of statistics.
- Statistics Norway bears the responsibility for the content of published statistics and for setting release dates.

Access to administrative registers

The Statistics Act gives Statistics Norway unlimited access to a number of administrative registers, so that statistics can be produced on the basis of figures that already exist. Few countries have such high-quality administrative registers as Norway, a source of information that Statistics Norway is making more and more use of. At present Statistics Norway utilises more than 60 administrative registers in its production of statistics. The use of such registers means that Statistics Norway does not have to ask people for information that they have already given to a public body.

The central population register in the Directorate of Taxes, the Brønnøysund Register Centre's Central Coordinating Register for Legal Entities, Statistics Norway's Central Register of Establishments and Enterprises and the Norwegian Mapping Authority's Ground Property, Address and Building Register (GAB) are particularly important as, in addition to forming a basis for many statistics, they identify the most central units on which official statistics are based. In short, this includes national identity numbers for individuals, registration numbers for businesses and organisations and addresses for properties, buildings and houses.

Furthermore, the Act makes it possible for Statistics Norway to combine data from various administrative registers. Because the registers use national identity numbers, company registration numbers or addresses, they enable Statistics Norway to easily combine information from these registers into statistics that mirror how various aspects of Norwegian society are related.

Data security

Statistics Norway has a duty to comply with the Personal Data Act and the rules set out by the Data Inspectorate with regard to the processing of personal data. Statistics Norway complies with the Data Inspectorate's security requirements for the processing of sensitive personal data and its routines for data protection have been developed in cooperation with the Data Inspectorate. Statistics Norway has appointed a personal protection delegate whose responsibility it is to ensure compliance with the legislation. All employees of Statistics Norway have signed a confidentiality agreement. Confidentiality breaches are liable to punishment.



Foto: Siri Boquist

An institution that counts

User-financed commissions

Statistics Norway is a public institution that receives most of its funding from the national budget. However, approximately 25 per cent of its activities are financed by its users. Ministries and other public bodies are the main customers and make up almost two thirds of the user-financed income. Another 10 per cent of the income comes from the Norwegian Research Council. Statistics Norway takes on paid commissions which serve to complement its statistics and research activities and contribute to further improving its ability to describe major aspects of Norwegian society.

Producing statistics is expensive. What statistics should be compiled and how, is therefore planned and discussed thoroughly with the most important users of the statistics and some of the respondents before the first data are collected.

Data collection can be organised in several ways. Sometimes Statistics Norway cooperates with other public bodies and receives data from their registers. For instance, Statistics Norway cooperates with the Directorate of Taxes and has access to tax return data. In cases where the required data do not exist, Statistics Norway collects the data by sending forms to a sample of businesses or individuals. Statistics Norway sends out 400 000 forms every year. An increasing number of the forms can be completed electronically. In addition, almost 200 000 interviews are conducted over the telephone or by means of personal interviews.

However the data collected cannot be used right away. There is always a risk of errors and misunderstandings, regardless of who is filling in the form. Therefore the collected data are always checked against what was reported in the preceding year or against general information about the industry, group of municipalities, the group of individuals that is being interviewed or compared with data from other subject areas.

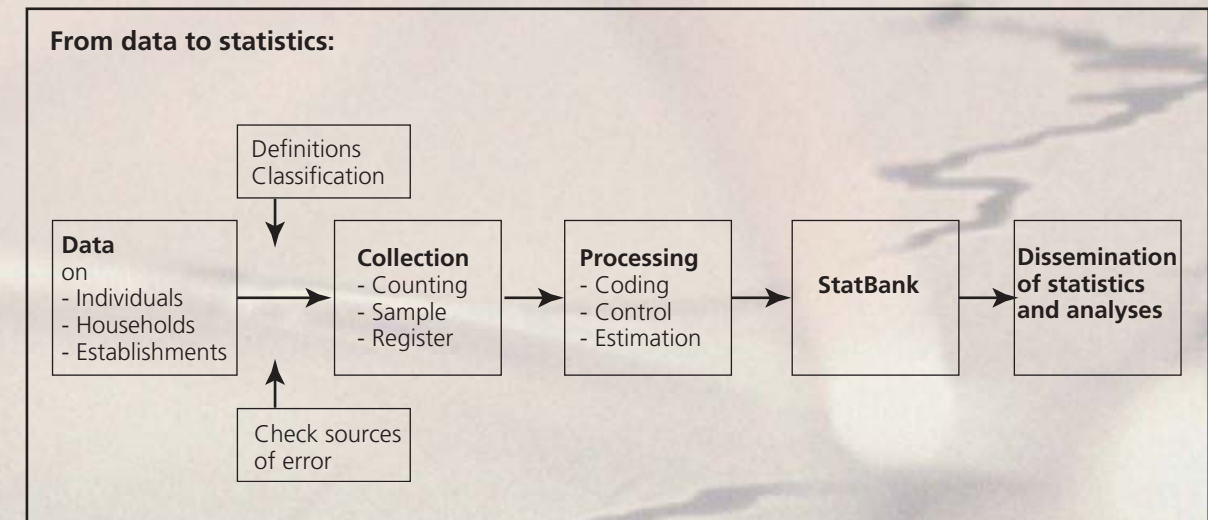
The terms and categories used must be standardised to ensure that the same term is always defined in the same way. Thus, the statistics can be compared over time and with similar statistics in Norway and internationally.

Reduced burden for Norwegian businesses

It is Statistics Norway's aim to reduce to a minimum the time our respondents spend on completing our forms. Every year, business and industry spend approximately 100 man-years on completing forms from Statistics Norway and individuals spend just under 80 man-years. The response burden has been reduced in recent years and now accounts for less than 2 per cent of business and industry's total time spent on completing forms from state institutions.

Statistics Norway is working in different areas to reduce the response burden further. The most important measure is to help improve Norwegian administrative registers so that they can be used in the production of statistics. Thus it will no longer be necessary to ask for the same information twice. Furthermore, an increasing amount of data is collected from the respondents' own computer systems and from third parties, for instance from the head office of a chain of shops.

When we do send out forms to business and industry, we try to limit the response burden by providing electronic forms and forms tailor-made for certain groups, and by completing some of the information in advance, such as the previous year's figures. Statistics Norway also aims at sharing the response burden more equally between businesses and individuals by replacing respondents as frequently as possible.



Statistics production at Statistics Norway

- **New statistics are born:** Every year new statistics are developed at Statistics Norway. The driving force behind new statistics is changes in society that need to be described. New statistics can also be developed for external customers, however, the same stringent requirements on relevance have to be met for user-financed commissions.
- **Statistical sources:** The data come from two main sources: surveys and administrative registers. In addition, an increasing amount of data are collected from businesses and municipalities' own computer systems.
- **Processing:** Data must be processed before they can be used in statistics. The information must be checked and categorised according to defined standards so that they can be compared with other statistics. Information from one source is often linked to information from other sources in order to achieve a more complete picture of society.
- **Dissemination:** The statistics are loaded into StatBank and presented on ssb.no and in printed publications. Statistics Norway also reports a broad range of statistics to international organisations.

A source of information

ssb.no

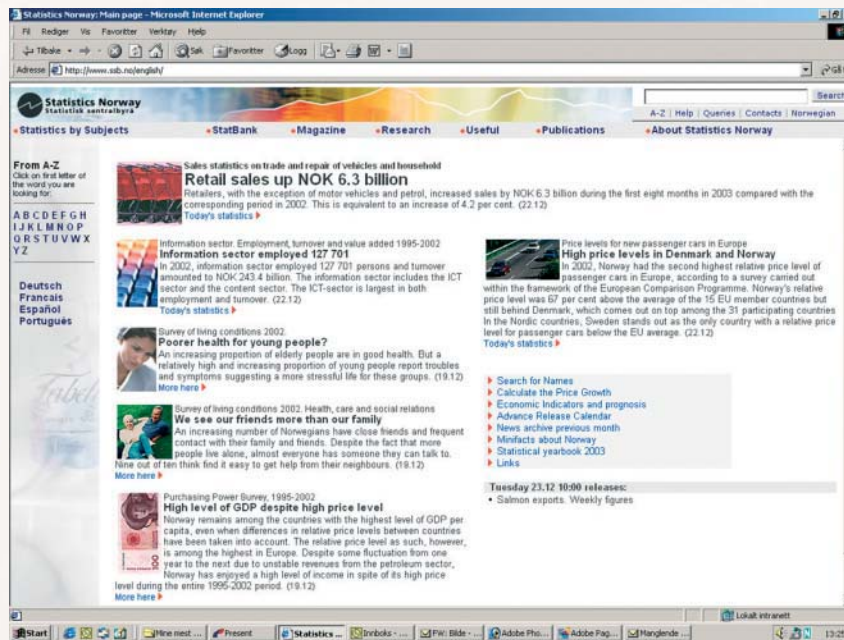
Statistics Norway's web site ssb.no contains up-to-date statistics and analyses in addition to detailed background information on the various statistics. The information published on ssb.no is free of charge. The statistics can be found by clicking on Statistics by Subjects or by using the Search or A-Z functions. An e-mail subscription service is also available. All publications from Statistics Norway are available in electronic format on ssb.no.

StatBank

Every time Statistics Norway publishes new statistics, the data are loaded into StatBank, whereupon the users can retrieve the data they need and create their own tables and maps showing regional differences. The tables can be exported in a range of formats to the user's computer for further processing.

Statistics are of no value unless they are used, and in order for them to be used people must know that they exist. Dissemination and analyses of the statistics are therefore paramount to Statistics Norway. The distribution should provide useful and reliable information on the status or development in an area without containing so many details that individuals can be identified.

It is also essential that the statistics are not misunderstood or misinterpreted. That is why Statistics Norway always includes information on how the statistics are produced and the possible errors they may contain. A document containing such information - About the statistics - is published along with all new statistics.



The Internet is the main distribution channel for Statistics Norway. New statistics are published on ssb.no every day at 10 am. Statistics Norway also produces a number of printed publications. The statistics are common goods which are accessible to everyone simultaneously. No one gets the results before others, not even the Government or other state institutions.

The main printed publications

Statistical Yearbook of Norway is published every year, presenting a table view of the official statistics in most areas of Norwegian society.

Economic Survey is published six times a year, presenting articles on socio-economic conditions, overviews of economic trends in Norway and internationally, national accounts figures and other economic indicators.

This is Norway is a brief introduction to Norwegian society, described using Statistics Norway's statistics and analyses.

The series *Statistical Analysis* is aimed at non-specialists and offers an in-depth analysis of various areas, such as natural resources and the environment, information technology, crime, the media and health issues.

Official Statistics of Norway (NOS) contains the various statistics and provides an overview of the main results.

Minifacts about Norway presents key information on everything from official flag days and public holidays to geography, climate, the environment and the economy. Minifacts is available in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and German as well as Norwegian.



Trusted

Two out of three have great confidence in Statistics Norway

Almost 70 per cent of the Norwegian population have great confidence in Statistics Norway according to a survey carried out by the Norwegian opinion poll company MMI in October 2002. Statistics Norway is one of the institutions with the highest confidence level among the population. It is particularly those with higher education or high incomes who have great confidence in Statistics Norway.

The Norwegian people have great confidence in Statistics Norway and the statistics and analyses we produce. This is paramount to Statistics Norway. Trust can be gone in an instant, but can take years to rebuild. Thus, accuracy and autonomy are essential in statistics and research.

People can rest assured that the information they give us is not used for purposes other than those agreed, and they can feel safe that the data are kept secure at Statistics Norway. It is our guarantee that information provided to us by businesses and individuals will not be misused. The Statistics Act and Personal Data Act impose stringent rules on access to data and data processing.

Statistics Norway is the only national institution with access to most of the public registers of statistical relevance in Norway. The Statistics Act only allows for a one-way flow of information - only to Statistics Norway and never the other way around. Complying with these rules is crucial.

Statistics Norway also collects data directly from individuals via surveys. Before each survey, details are sent to the respondents explaining what the survey is about, any other information the data will be linked to and what the data will be used for.



Looking beyond national borders

Statistics is an international language. As cooperation across countries increases, so does the need to compare statistics. Statistics that are produced in the same way in different countries enable good comparisons. That is why international organisations such as the EU, the UN, the IMF and the OECD work actively to coordinate work being done in the statistics field and to establish international standards for statistics production. There is also a close collaboration between the Nordic offices of statistics.

From Norway's perspective, the work undertaken in Eurostat, the EU office of statistics, is of particular importance. In order to facilitate comparisons of Norwegian statistics and statistics from the rest of Europe, Norway plays an active part in Eurostat. Since the mid-1990s the Eurostat work has become increasingly comprehensive and binding. As a result, the Norwegian statistics production has been adapted to conform with the rest of Europe. Norway is committed to this work through the EEA Agreement, which affects the formulation of more than half of Statistics Norway's statistics.

Statistics Norway regularly sends statistical data about Norway to the EU and other international organisations in order to ensure that Norwegian statistics are included in international databases and publications.

Statistics is a necessary tool for describing trends in any country. Statistics Norway contributes to the development of national offices of statistics in several countries, including Mozambique, Uganda, Angola, Malawi and Albania. The work consists of advisory tasks and helping to build national offices of statistics in countries with less adequate statistical systems.

The United Nation's Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

1. Official statistics provide an indispensable element in the information system of a democratic society, serving the Government, the economy and the public with data about the economic, demographic, social and environmental situation. To this end, official statistics that meet the test of practical utility are to be compiled and made available on an impartial basis by official statistical agencies to honour citizens' entitlement to public information.
2. To retain trust in official statistics, the statistical agencies need to decide according to strictly professional considerations, including scientific principles and professional ethics, on the methods and procedures for the collection, processing, storage and presentation of statistical data.
3. To facilitate a correct interpretation of the data, the statistical agencies are to present information according to scientific standards on the sources, methods and procedures of the statistics.
4. The statistical agencies are entitled to comment on erroneous interpretation and misuse of statistics.
5. Data for statistical purposes may be drawn from all types of sources, be they statistical surveys or administrative records. Statistical agencies are to choose the source with regard to quality, timeliness, costs and the burden on respondents.
6. Individual data collected by statistical agencies for statistical compilation, whether they refer to natural or legal persons, are to be strictly confidential and used exclusively for statistical purposes.
7. The laws, regulations and measures under which the statistical systems operate are to be made public.
8. Coordination among statistical agencies within countries is essential to achieve consistency and efficiency in the statistical system.
9. The use by statistical agencies in each country of international concepts, classifications and methods promotes the consistency and efficiency of statistical systems at all official levels.
10. Bilateral and multilateral cooperation in statistics contributes to the improvement of systems of official statistics in all countries.

At your service

This is what you can expect from Statistics Norway:

- if you want to use statistics and analyses

- Statistics and analyses are available free of charge on ssb.no. The statistics can be used by everyone, provided that Statistics Norway is quoted as the source.
- Release dates for statistics are published in the Advance Release Calendar. No one has access to the statistics before they are released.
- The statistics are accompanied by information on how they were produced.
- In the event of delay, notification will be given on ssb.no. In the event of errors in publications, these will be corrected and notification will be given on ssb.no immediately.
- The majority of Statistics Norway's statistics and analyses are published both in Norwegian and English.
- SSB takes on paid commissions which may involve the production of statistics and analyses within certain subject areas or additional preparation of statistics and analyses.
- Access to micro data can be given for research and planning purposes. Non-sensitive micro data can under special circumstances be distributed, accompanied by a notification to the Data Inspectorate. In general terms the provision of sensitive data requires the researchers to have a licence from the Data Inspectorate and for the data to have been made unidentifiable.

- if you have been asked to fill in a form or be interviewed

- Some interviews are personal interviews, although the majority are conducted over the telephone. You will receive a letter from Statistics Norway well in advance of the interviewer contacting you.
- If the survey is mandatory, this will be stated in the letter or questionnaire, with reference to the Act that gives Statistics Norway the legal authority to impose such an obligation.
- For mandatory surveys, Statistics Norway has a legal right to impose compulsory fines on respondents who do not provide the information requested. Income generated from compulsory fines goes to the Norwegian authorities - not Statistics Norway.
- You should not have to provide the same information to more than one public institution. Statistics Norway has access to public registers and collects data directly from them.
- Statistics Norway works to keep the response burden at a minimum.

900 employees, two towns, one institution

The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is appointed by the Government. The duties and tasks of the Committee are outlined in the Statistics Act: the Executive Committee shall discuss and stipulate the long-term programme, the draft budget and the annual working plan proposed by the Director General, and place these matters and the annual report before the Ministry.

Otherwise the Executive Committee plays a general supervisory role with respect to the development of official statistics and the activities of Statistics Norway.

Statistics Norway is a professionally autonomous institution placed under the Ministry of Finance. Statistics Norway has an executive committee that is appointed by the Government.

Statistics Norway has approximately 900 employees, almost 400 in the town of Kongsvinger and just over 500 in Oslo. In addition, Statistics Norway employs approximately 150 interviewers throughout the country and 30 interviewers in Oslo, who carry out work totalling 40 man-years.

Statistics Norway's annual budget is almost NOK 500 million. Government funding constitutes 75 per cent of the budget whereas 25 per cent is made up of user-financed commissions. Statistics Norway has seven departments; the Department of Economic Statistics, the Department of Social Statistics, the Department of Industry Statistics, the Research Department, the Department of Administrative Affairs, the Department of Communication and the Department of IT and Data Collection.

Millions of figures since 1876

Statistics Norway saw the light of day in 1876 with a staff of 15. Since then the institution has produced millions of figures and thousands of analyses and carried out innumerable counts and surveys. The number of employees and activity increased significantly after the Second World War. The Research Department was established in 1950 and the first computer was purchased in 1958. The first punch operators were employed in Kongsvinger in connection with the population census in 1960. Since then the Kongsvinger office has grown to almost the same size as the Oslo office.

- 1769 The first population census
- 1797 The Ministry of Finance sets up a separate statistics department
- 1876 Statistics Norway is established
- 1907 The first Statistics Act
- 1953 The Central Register of Establishments and Enterprises
- 1964 The Population Register
- 1989 New Statistics Act
- 1993 The EEA Agreement makes Statistics Norway part of the EU statistical system

More information on Statistics Norway?

ssb.no: Statistics Norway's web site contains up-to-date information on Statistics Norway and important documents, such as the strategy plan Strategy 2002, the annual report, activity reports and the service declaration. The web site also contains a recruitment page, organisation chart and addresses / e-mail lists.

Strategy 2002 is Statistics Norway's principal steering document. It contains guidelines for future work. Strategy 2002 is published in Norwegian and English.

The Annual Report describes the main developments in Statistics Norway's activities in the year gone by. It is published in Norwegian and English.

Queries regarding statistics and publications can be directed to the Library and Information Centre, which is a centre of expertise for official Norwegian and international statistics and is situated at:

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