



STATISTICS  
DENMARK

# Strategy 2020



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## Strategy 2020

**We deliver knowledge to underpin decisions, debates and research**

Statistics Denmark is the central producer of statistics in Denmark. Our main task is to describe social and economic trends through numbers. The knowledge we produce forms the basis for debates, research and analyses, and simultaneously ensures that decisions can be made on the basis of trustworthy and objective information at all levels in Danish society – from national policies to the individual transactions of households.

Our history dates back to the establishment of democracy in Denmark, and continues to underpin it to this day. Meaningful and impartial statistics support democracy and the national economy. The long history of Statistics Denmark has imbued the institution with the core values:

- Independence
- Trustworthiness
- Data security
- User-orientation

These values are still key. At the same time, we need to develop to remain relevant in a continuously evolving world. This strategy specifies the most important areas for action in order to realise Statistics Denmark's vision for 2020:

**We envisage that in 2020 Statistics Denmark is transformed into a "generator of data and knowledge", which is strongly oriented toward our external stakeholders and which contributes to a strengthened understanding of socio-economic phenomena.**

Statistics Denmark  
October 2015

Jørgen Elmeskov  
Director General



## Pressures for change

At present, society is characterised by a number of developments, which make new and increased demands on statistics: tremendous technological development, deepening and widening globalisation, increased focus on new social phenomena, e.g. climate change, and consequences of the global financial crisis.

Developments in information technology are leading to a huge increase in the quantity of data, which can be converted into new sources for compiling statistics. Our data providers have a justified expectation that we exploit the technological opportunities to reduce their response burden to the greatest possible extent. New platforms for disseminating statistics create opportunities to promote awareness of statistics. At the same time, there is an inherent danger of “information overload”, where independent and impartial statistics run the risk of drowning in the numerous news flows. Lastly, digitalisation of the public sector creates a demand for data integration, which also includes statistical data, e.g. for development of political reforms. At the same time, citizens need to remain confident that the information they provide us is in safe hands. This confidence is a prerequisite for gathering representative primary data and thereby for compiling reliable statistics.

Globalisation of business activity implies a rising demand for statistics on cross-border phenomena. Increasing mobility of people creates new demands for statistical analyses and data. Furthermore, international harmonisation is important to enable cross-border comparisons and benchmarking.

Recent years have seen an increased focus on topics such as environmental and social sustainability. One example is the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Similarly, there is a growing interest in the determinants of citizens’ perceived quality of life. Both examples give rise to expectation of statistical monitoring.

The economic and financial crisis has resulted in new statistical requirements. In addition to the production of new statistics, there are increased demands for coordination between Statistics Denmark and other official producers of statistics. In the EU there is agreement on stronger demands concerning quality, documentation, and independence of statistical production, which are key to develop trustworthy and usable statistics, providing a representative picture of society. The increasing demands have an impact on framework condition for as well as contents of the statistical production.

Statistics Denmark must meet the demands and explore the opportunities in this development.

We must extend our interaction with the surrounding world, with central users and with respondents. This helps us understand how we can meet their needs in the best possible way and make efficient solutions available. We must deliver our data and products in a manner ensuring that they are of the greatest possible statistical use to others. And we must take care that the form and contents of the statistics are aimed precisely at the relevant target groups.

Our dissemination services must ensure our relevance to the political agenda and public debate. Our task is not only to present statistical data, but also to put them into perspective by means of comparisons and in-depth analyses and provide coherent pictures across different statistics.

These requirements are to be fulfilled within tight budget constraints.

Independence, trustworthiness, data security and user-orientation are the core values of Statistics Denmark. In dealing with the challenges and exploring the opportunities mentioned above, we must maintain our core values concurrently with strengthening the following:

- Adaptability
- Holistic attitude
- Openness

How we approach these values is described on the following pages, and our areas for action are divided into 5 main themes:

- Services
- Processes
- Data sources
- Data security
- Statistical cooperation

For each main theme, a number of objectives are laid down, and for each objective, we provide examples of planned actions. We plan bi-annual revisions of the strategy to best mitigate new and evolving demands and reflect progress made. Our annual work programme will describe the specific initiatives we plan each year to realise the objectives of the strategy by 2020.

## 1. Services

The main task of Statistics Denmark is to produce statistics analysing social and economic conditions. We also meet special statistical needs for private and public customer against compensation.

Among the most important preconditions of achieving our vision for 2020 are an improved awareness of the statistical needs of users and a heightened ability to meet these needs. This implies that our active participation in discussions with users is strengthened and that we are proactive in identifying user needs and respond to changes. Improving awareness of user needs is best achieved by participating in forums frequented by users, and contribute to public debates where and when it is of relevance.

We have developed comprehensive, statistical knowledge, which must be made available to external users to the greatest extent possible. This is carried out through our dissemination services, which put the statistics into perspective and show coherence across the statistics, thereby adding additional value to them.

A similar task of importance is to accommodate special customer needs, and here we must make efforts to identify and cover these needs in contact and dialogue with our users.

One of the most important users is the research community, where a significant development in social science takes place, and from which Statistics Denmark can benefit. As the central statistics producer, we do not only have an obligation to society, but also an own self-interest in underpinning the use of our data by researchers. We are also responsible for ensuring that new achievements in the statistical domain are of use to research and analysis.

Statistics Denmark's website is the central dissemination channel for the statistics that we produce. In the future, society can reasonably expect that we present an overall view of official statistics in Denmark – also the statistics produced outside of Statistics Denmark. It will be considerably easier for users to search for information when all relevant information on official statistics is gathered under one single portal. Against this backdrop, and in collaboration with other statistics producers, we will provide efficient and modern access to statistics.



## Services

- we add additional value to the statistics for our users

### **a. Adaptation to new and changing needs of users**

- Faster release of selected statistics, e.g. the quarterly GDP, industrial accounts statistics and statistics on businesses.
- Establishment of a new, coherent business sector databank, where anonymous information can be linked at the level of businesses across statistics.
- Development of new and existing statistics, e.g. green national accounts, globalisation statistics, consumer price index for household types, educational attainment of immigrants, and statistics on quality of life.

### **b. Greater use of statistics in public debates**

- Contributions in the news media and through own media where we describe and analyse social and economic trends based on statistics.
- Participation in events, e.g. People's Meeting on Bornholm.
- Special data processing of statistics relating to current topics.

### **c. Greater relevance of the statistics published by means of analyses**

- Higher focus on coherence in statistics.
- Increased use of international comparisons in the statistics published.
- Explanations and putting new statistics into perspective, e.g. in relation to short-term developments.
- Analyses of current topics on social and economic trends across statistical domains.

### **d. Expansion of user charges in response to market opportunities and needs**

- Increased awareness of opportunities for statistics and analyses among users.
- Development of new products and services in demand.

### **e. Strengthening contact with the research community**

- Collaboration with Danish and foreign researchers.
- Cooperation with tertiary educational institutions with the objective of attracting bachelor-, postgraduate- and PhD students.
- Cooperation on developing the infrastructure of social sciences.
- Cooperation on disseminating new knowledge obtained by using data from Statistics Denmark.

### **f. Full exploitation of digital opportunities related to dissemination services**

- Cooperation with other producers on establishing a common platform for official Danish statistics.
- Establishment of thematic accesses on Statistics Denmark's website.
- Digitalisation of Statistics Denmark's publications, providing easy access and searchable information across publications.
- Enhanced flexibility on the website for users.

## 2. Processes

Great attention will be focused on our processes to deliver more and better statistics using fewer resources. The production system must be efficient, structured to meet future requirements and serve as platform for product innovation.

IT systems are the pivotal point for realising many of the efficiency gains. Our IT organisation is to be merged, which will result in a more efficient and flexible exploitation of resources and in a higher level of IT professional standards.

Standard solutions will be given higher priority entailing that identical tasks are managed in a homogeneous manner. The expansion of a functional organisation structure of our tasks must be continued and especially the methods and processes for systems development, editing data reports and correction of errors must become more efficient. At the same time, it must be easier to combine data across statistical domains. Similarly, the work on establishing a single common system for documentation and dissemination of metadata adhering to international standards will be continued.

The quality in statistics is to a great extent dependent on the data reported by the largest companies. A special unit for these companies will be set up to ensure close-knit collaboration with the companies, while at the same time achieving more consistent data. In this way, we will improve quality and consistency in statistics and at the same time reduce the response burden on the business community in relation to Statistics Denmark.

The strategic objectives are to be achieved by the employees. In-house competencies must be further improved, enabling us to undertake changes and to underpin the realisation of the strategic objectives.

## Processes

- we invest in efficient processes and professional employees

### **a. Better quality management**

- Regular quality assessments of all statistics.
- Incorporation of quality targets for all sub-processes in the production of statistics.
- Standardised practice for preparing statistics revisions.
- Systematic use of user evaluations – in relation to statistical products as well as data reporting solutions.

### **b. Production system with increasing use of standard solutions which are robust as well as flexible**

- Establishment and implementation of a standard system for prioritised search and correction of errors in the data reported.
- Systematic use of international standards and best practice for business processes.

### **c. Focus resources on where improvement potential is the highest**

- Development of efficient IT systems in statistical domains of great importance, e.g. national accounts and government finance.
- Establishment of a 'key account' unit responsible for cooperation with the largest and most complex companies.
- Enhancing the efficiency of in-house communication, e.g. by means of a new intranet and common metadata.

### **d. Professional and innovative employees**

- Development of competencies underpinning the objective of using standard solutions in the statistics production.
- Establishment and underpinning of project groups for knowledge sharing and analytical work across Statistics Denmark.
- Establishing forms of cooperation and a physical office environment promoting cooperation, communication and innovation.
- Use of certified project managers in connection with major development tasks.

### 3. Data sources

Over the last 20 years, Statistics Denmark has made targeted efforts to reduce the burden of response on businesses, authorities and private individuals reporting data. During this period, the response burden on businesses was reduced by about 50 pct. and continued attention is focused on the response burden – both the measurable and the experienced burden.

The response burden can be further reduced by developing more user-friendly and efficient data reporting solutions and by promoting solutions which will make it possible to deliver statistical data automatically to Statistics Denmark from the systems operated by businesses and public authorities. The aim of enhancing the efficiency of the data reporting solutions is to prevent or to capture errors to a higher degree in relation to the process of data reporting, so that we do not have to inconvenience the respondents by contacting them again, when subsequent errors are to be corrected. We will also make efforts to develop new data reporting solutions closer to the respondents and adapted to the process of data reporting, e.g. apps for mobile phones. We will also enhance efficiency of the sample surveys, reducing the number of respondents.

Denmark plays a leading role internationally with regard to using administrative registers as bases for compiling statistics, but there is still a great potential for exploitation of administrative registers. Statistics Denmark will ensure that attention is increasingly focused on these data sources through strategic alliances with important suppliers of register-based data, e.g. common rules with regard to quality assurance in administrative systems where data are first recorded. In this way, we can ensure consistent data supplies, better data quality and access to new types of information.

The massive development in the quantity of digital data implies that a number of new data sources are made available for compiling statistics. These sources are called 'big data', and over the years to come it will be an important challenge to identify the data sources suited for compiling statistics and subsequently incorporate them into the statistics production. Close cooperation with the business sector can be instrumental in establishing reliable frameworks in relation to the new data sources and enhance their usefulness. Today, we cooperate with the largest supermarket chains about the use of scanning data for compiling consumer prices, and we will in a similar way explore the possibilities of using other data sources.

## Data sources

- we are at the forefront of new data reporting solutions and data sources

### a. Continuous reduction of the response burden

- Implementation of online data editing in interactive data reporting solutions and increasing use of automatic correction of errors of minor importance in the data reported ("immediate validation").
- Development and distribution of system-by-system reporting solutions in several statistical domains. This will, e.g. be conducted in strategic collaborations with private systems suppliers.
- Data are received automatically from public systems, e.g. from municipal registrations related to social welfare.
- Higher degree of reusing information in connection with interviews, e.g. the Labour Force Survey.

### b. Strategic alliances with central data suppliers and owners of data registers

- Concrete agreements and regular follow-up on suppliers of administrative data, e.g. the Danish tax authority, central ministries, government agencies and municipalities.
- A focused dialogue with owners of data registers about requirements and needs in relation to using data from administrative systems in the production of statistics.
- Cooperation with producers of 'Big Data' (e.g. the retail trade, card companies, telecommunications companies, social media) on using data in the production of statistics.

### c. Exploitation of new data sources where it is considered meaningful, e.g. Big Data

- Use of new public data sources, e.g. digital accounting data and geo-data for socio-economic cluster analyses.
- Use of new private data sources where it is possible, e.g. barcode data in the consumer price index, credit card information in the tourism and balance of payments statistics, data obtained from ticketing systems in the statistics on cinemas, performing arts and commuting as well as data from the utility sector used in compiling energy statistics.

## 4. Data security

Concurrently with the increasing focus on digitalisation and internationalisation in all areas of society, there is a growing risk that individuals obtain unauthorised computer access to confidential data. Data security is a top priority for Statistics Denmark – our activity depends entirely on the confidence of citizens and businesses that we are in complete control of the data.

To be able to compile statistics, large quantities of confidential information are generated as the basis for statistics. Consequently, large quantities of confidential data are available at Statistics Denmark and we are obliged to take all necessary measures to ensure that citizens and businesses can rely on our systems. We must also make sure that data are in a safe manner made useful for compiling statistics and conducting analyses, e.g. by researchers and by ministries.

Handling data reported by citizens and businesses in a confidential manner has always been part of Statistics Denmark's DNA. It is strongly impressed upon new employees on their first day of work that it is essential to comply with the rules for handling confidential data. We secure our data by using high security standards and our security systems and access to data are continuously checked by independent experts to ensure that we are protected from outside network attacks to the greatest extent possible. In the future, unidentifiable personal information is entrusted to employees at Statistics Denmark to ensure that personal confidential information is not leaked.

Assurance of data confidentiality within the European statistical system is also an essential precondition of exchanging identifiable data with European partners. Initiatives involving mandatory exchange of identifiable business data are expected to be intensified in the years to come. This is carried out to ensure that the burden of response on businesses is minimised, the quality of statistics is increased and the consumption of resources in producing statistics is reduced. Exchange of data must take place in a manner which implies that the respondents are fully confident in supplying data to Statistics Denmark, and should only take place in areas where there are strong arguments in favour hereof and where other solutions are not possible.



## Data security

- we take good care of data in the digital world

### **a. High standards for handling data**

- Current revision of the data confidentiality policy and surveillance of adherence to this policy to ensure that data on citizens and businesses are not misused.
- Heightening focus on data security by means of courses and other awareness activities for Statistics Denmark's employees and external users of data.
- Continuous development of security routines securing and checking access and use of data by our employees and external users.

### **b. Protecting the physical security of our data**

- Minimising the number of employees who have access to identifiable data at the level of individuals.
- Adjustment of the processing of data so that data processing is performed on the basis of anonymous data to the greatest extent possible.
- Surveillance of in-house processing of confidential data via registration of data at the input stage.

### **c. Delimited and safe exchange of data in the European statistical system**

- Development of solutions for covering statistical needs which will imply that exchange of microdata is not necessary.
- Setting up clear criteria for when exchange of identifiable microdata in the European statistical system can take place, e.g. in relation to the burden of response on businesses, sensitivity of information and statistical needs.
- Establishing clear and safe procedures and standards for the confidential processing of exchange of information as well as deciding who is unambiguously responsible for the compliance of these.

## 5. Statistical cooperation

Statistics Denmark is the central authority for producing Danish statistics. With this background, we have a special obligation to take a leading role in ensuring that official Danish statistics adhere to relevant standards and thereby forming the basis for compiling reliable and relevant statistics for decision-makers, research and general public debates.

We are legally required to coordinate Statistics Denmark's contribution to the European production of statistics and to prepare guidelines ensuring high quality and to supervise compliance with these. Similar quality requirements should apply to other official Danish statistics. We will, therefore, make efforts to ensure that official Danish statistics adhere to the same guidelines as those laid down for European statistics. This work will be embedded in a new Danish statistics act. We will make efforts to ensure that this act takes into account the new requirements in relation to independence, quality and security.

The statistical quality depends on the primary data used. Homogeneous and consistent primary data are essential in producing statistics, which are coherent and mutually consistent across domains and over time. Solutions are developed to ensure that these primary data can be made accessible to other public authorities and which simultaneously take data security into account.

The majority of the statistical production is subject to EU legislation. Over the next couple of years, substantial increases of resource requirements are expected to comply with new EU legislation. We wish to promote Danish statistical requirements by exerting strong influence on the work performed in the EU system, and we must establish sustainable – and not unnecessarily expensive – solutions, which can be instrumental in ensuring a continuous production of a wide range of high-quality statistics.

## Statistical cooperation

- we cooperate with other producers of statistics

### **a. Strengthened cooperation and coordination in the Danish statistical system**

- Establishment of an overall view of the statistics produced by public authorities in Denmark.
- Development of common guidelines for the statistics production in cooperation with other producers of statistics.
- Introduction of 'official statistics' as a recognized quality stamp for producing Danish statistics.

### **b. Common consistent primary data from public producers**

- Cooperation with public data suppliers (ministries, government agencies, regions and municipalities) on a common and efficient data collection.
- Participating in cooperation on efficient use of data in the public sector with ministries, government agencies and municipalities.

### **c. Up-to-date revision of the Act on Statistics Denmark**

- Efforts to ensure that a new act applies to all official statistics.
- Incorporation into a new act of the European legislative requirements in relation to increasing independence, quality and coordination.
- Setting up a more flexible framework for data collection which opens up the possibility of collecting data on new topics of relevance to society.

### **d. Strong Danish influence in the EU and other international forums**

- Strengthening the Danish protection of interests through intensified cooperation with other countries.
- Efforts to ensure that European legislation takes Danish and European user needs for statistics equally into account.
- Attention is focused on ensuring that tools and methods, which are developed in a European context, can be used in producing Danish statistics.
- Efforts to ensure that new EU requirements are based on a systematic assessment of cost effects.