

## 5. Objectives for Statistics and Dissemination

### 5.1 Statistical Developments

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <i>The Development of Society</i>             | <p>The developments in society will present great challenges to national statistical institutions. Some of the most important trends emerging are those of growing global economic integration, the development of information technologies, the growing importance of service industries and the process of European integration.</p>  |
| <i>The Information Society</i>                | <p>Information technology is of ever increasing importance to developments within society, the implications giving rise to the concept of an information society, replacing the former industrial society and service society. The information society eliminates distances - operates globally - enabling us, through the electronic media, to follow developments around the world. An information society carries with it an almost overwhelming volume of information and data, which can make interpretations of life and society very difficult.</p> <p>As the information society grows, the importance of statistics grows with it. Statistics are pieces of information. This information provides the basis for political, economic and other decisions.</p>  |
| <i>The Principles for Coherent Statistics</i> | <p>The role of statistics is to shed light on developments within society. For statistical information to be of the greatest significance, it needs to be as coherent as possible. Statistics Denmark has determined the following goals on statistical coherence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Statistics must be <i>coherent over time</i>. When there is a need to revise current statistics, Statistics Denmark will strive to establish consistent time series correcting any gaps in statistical information.</li><li>• Statistics must be <i>conceptually coherent</i>. As far as possible, statistics shedding light on different aspects of life should contribute to a coherent picture of developments within society as a whole. Towards this end, a given concept will have only one definition when used in a variety of statistical areas.</li><li>• Statistics must be <i>presented coherently</i>.</li><li>• Statistics must be <i>internationally coherent</i>.</li></ul> <p>These four principles are to be realised via the strategic objectives for statistical developments, dissemination and international cooperation.</p>  |
| <i>Objectives for Research and Analyses</i>   | <p>It is important that the development of statistics is conducted on a scientific basis. It is also of importance that Statistics Denmark's numerous registers and databases are used for purposes of research and analyses by researchers. To ensure this Statistics Denmark works together with university researchers and relevant international professional networks. This work places Statistics Denmark in a position to contribute to the education of PhD students. The following objectives have been determined:</p> <div><p>17. Statistics Denmark also carries out its own <i>research projects and analyses</i> within selected areas, notably economic models, "green national accounts", population trends, the information society, long time series of historical data and statistical methods. This work results in an increasing number of publications analysing specific themes in conjunction with the current publication of statistics.</p><p>18. <i>Researchers and analysts</i> are to make increasing use of Statistics Denmark's registers and databases. In addition to research purposes this may contribute to developing the production of statistics and other products of Statistics Denmark.</p></div> |

*Objectives for European Statistics on Short-Term and Structural Trends*

The EU cooperation concerning the Economic and Monetary Union imposes high demands on Member States to produce comparable statistics. This also applies to the decision of the Heads of State and Government of the EU, which aims to transform the EU into "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and a greater social cohesion". To meet these ends the following objectives have been determined:

19. In accordance with the politically approved *Action Plan* (from September 2000) in the field of statistics concerning the EMU, a large number of statistics intended for monitoring economic developments will be developed. To meet the requirements of the action plan we will *expand* and *speed up* the compilation of: employment and labour cost statistics, short-term indicators on manufacturing, construction and retail trade, quarterly national accounts, foreign trade statistics, balance of payments statistics, quarterly accounts for public finances and dissemination of economic short-term indicators.
20. According to the political decisions (Lisbon Summit March 2000, Nice Summit December 2000) a statistical system to measure structural trends in the EU Member States will be developed, the so-called *structural indicators*. They concern a large number of indicators within five main areas: general economic conditions, employment, innovation and research, economic reforms and social solidarity.

*Objectives for Social Statistics*

For social statistics, the following objectives have been determined:

21. A policy on *integrated statistical registers*, or databases which contain data from various statistical registers, will be developed. The registers will have a wide range of data and an efficient work process enabling the opportunity to conduct analyses and research at lower costs. The development of these integrated statistical registers, their limits, their contents, name and technical construction, will be determined in the policy.
22. We will continue the integration of *labour market statistics*; the working time accounts and labour market accounts being developed further. These two accounts will be linked to the national accounts as satellite accounts, enabling better analysis of the links between economic development and the labour market.

*Objectives for Business Statistics*

Within the field of business statistics, Statistics Denmark has determined the following objectives:

23. Statistics on enterprises will be *co-ordinated and integrated* to a higher degree. This applies to structural data as well as short-term indicators. The register system of business statistics will provide the basis for the production of these statistics, and will be further developed to include economic units, and omitting insignificant units.
24. Statistics on the *service industries*, especially within the IT field, will be expanded to cover these growing areas more thoroughly.
25. *Business demographics*, i.e. statistics on the birth, death and survival of enterprises will also be expanded.

26. General economic statistics, the scope of which is defined by the *national accounts*, will be consolidated and continually expanded, enabling the complete national accounts system (SNA93/ESA95) to be implemented by the end of the period. It is important to maintain Statistics Denmark's strength in the compilation of national accounts and input-output tables, especially in view of the growing administrative use within the EU, of national account figures.
27. *Statistics on the environment and energy* will be developed with the aim to produce systematic and cohesive environment, energy and resource balance data. These statistics will then be linked to the national accounts as satellite accounts (green national accounts). This will allow for better comparisons of economic and environmental development and will contribute towards the debate on sustainable development.

The economic model ADAM (a macroeconomic model) will continue to meet international standards concerning the use of economic theories and empirical methods. The development of this model will continue to reflect the development of Danish economic institutions.

## 5.2 Quality

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <i>Quality</i>                  | Quality is the responsibility of the individual staff member and the result of the working procedures, methodologies, technologies and organisation. We can talk of quality of results, as well as quality of process. In this section we describe quality of results and some of the processes used to ensure quality results.  |
| <i>The Concept of Quality</i>   | Statistical institutions from many countries share an understanding of what quality means. Statistics Denmark expresses quality in 5 dimensions – high quality statistics are seen as relevant, reliable, timely, coherent and accessible.   |
| <i>Declarations of Contents</i> | Statistics Denmark has produced Declarations of Contents to document the quality of more than 250 different statistical products. Via Statistics Denmark's homepage on the Internet there is free access to our Declarations of Contents. Each of our Declarations of Contents have similar formats and the contents are described in relation to the 5 dimensions of quality. An abridged version of the Declarations of Contents can be found in the book <i>Guide to Statistics</i> .   |
| <i>The Policy of Quality</i>    | <p>In order to achieve high quality statistics we must focus on continual improvement within the following 5 dimensions. Statistics should be:</p> <p>A. <i>Relevant</i>. Statistics should shed light on the most important features and developments within society. They should be adapted to developments within society, so that their contents relate to current and potential user needs, both nationally and internationally.</p> <p>B. <i>Reliable</i>. The figures should be as accurate as possible. The picture given of society through figures, analyses and supporting text should be trustworthy.</p> <p><i>Provisional figures</i> will be the subject of a certain amount of uncertainty, but they should still give a true and fair picture. When figures are <i>estimated</i>, a measure of the statistical uncertainty for the main results should be stated.</p> |

The compilation of reliable statistics is a very demanding task. Much of the work undertaken by national statistical institutions world-wide, rests in controlling reports received from the data suppliers, and the editing of that data. *Quality control and data editing* are very resource intensive tasks.

Statistics Denmark's internal *quality assurance* guards against errors and statistical uncertainty. Initially the heads of division, together with their staff, are responsible for quality assurance, and our Dissemination Centre plays an active role. An extensive quality assurance policy exists for statistical areas of central importance: statistics referring to the balance of payments, foreign trade, the national accounts, public finances, unemployment and salaries.

Despite very careful quality control, experience has shown that on occasions inaccurate statistics have been published. Our policy is to *publish corrected statistics* as soon as possible.

*C. Timely.* Statistics should be published quickly in order to be of high value to the user. The speed of production is measured in two dimensions. The first dimension is that of *publication time*, i.e. the time distance between the statistics' reference point and the date of publication. The publication time can be divided into *data supplier time*, before Statistics Denmark has received the data, and the *internal production time*. The second dimension is that of adherence to *specialised goals of timeliness*, determined by Statistics Denmark. The goals imply that annual statistics are published within the end of the next year, quarterly statistics within the end of the next quarter and monthly statistics not later than 2 months. However a long data supplier time may result in difficulties of (sometimes impossible) meeting the goals. Facts 5-7 in appendix 4 show that the timeliness of the statistics has increased in the past years.

Statistics should also be published *on time*, i.e. at a previously determined point in time.

*D. Coherent.* Statistics should be easily comparable. As far as possible they should be internationally coherent, and coherent over time, conceptually coherent and presented in a coherent manner, see section 5.1.

*E. Accessible.* Statistics should be easily accessible to users, dissemination being adapted to the target user group. The two methods of dissemination, via electronic media and printed matter, should be used to optimum effect, see section 5.3.

**QUALISTAT** Statistics Denmark is continually striving to make improvements within these 5 dimensions of quality, through a number of different initiatives with the name QUALISTAT (Quality in Statistics).



**Objectives** QUALISTAT sets the objectives for the development of quality statistical products. These are:

28. An *Annual quality survey*, based on the Declarations of Contents, will be undertaken to judge the development in accordance with the five dimensions of quality. An *annual quality report* on the main results from the surveys will be published.
29. The publications and/or Declarations of Contents will be expanded in two areas. Firstly, the differences between the provisional and final statistics in areas where *provisional statistics* are compiled, will be documented. Secondly, an assessment of the *response rate* in the surveys of the statistical programme will be carried out.
30. *Annual quality projects* in the most important fields of statistics are carried out. Central quality dimensions in the quality projects are selected, and proposals are made for concrete improvements. The projects will result in a report on the quality improvements which have been made.
31. Statistics Denmark will carry out regular *satisfaction surveys* with the basic statistical programme, as well as the dissemination. The surveys will be directed towards the advisory committees as well as the main groups of statistical users. The surveys are expected to be more qualitative and will lead to a better dialogue with users.
32. The statistics should be *well documented*. All primary statistical registers will be documented in the system Times 2000. It is a fundamental principle that all data should only be documented once, and that this documentation should be a common resource.
33. The average *publication time* for monthly, quarterly and annual statistics will still be reduced. This goal will be met by primarily selecting a range of statistics each year where particular efforts will be made to reduce the publication time.
34. The number of statistics which observe *the specialised goals of timeliness* for publication time will continuously be increased.
35. We will develop a system to measure how many statistics are *produced on time*. The system will be based on advance announcements made in the work programme. These state how many weeks after the reference period, monthly and quarterly statistics are expected to be published, and how many months later annual statistics are expected. In addition, an extensive information system has been established on the Internet, in which expected publication dates are updated constantly.

### 5.3 Dissemination

*User-oriented Dissemination* Statistics should be of high quality, but this is insufficient in itself. If the statistics are not used efforts have been wasted.

Statistics should be disseminated to the general public in such a way that the users can both locate and use the statistics for their own purposes. The statistics should be presented in ways adapted to various user needs. Dissemination must be user-oriented.

*The Basic Principles of Dissemination* The user-oriented dissemination strategy is based on the following principles:

- Electronic dissemination is suitable for large amounts of data, and detailed statistics, so all statistical data will be available electronically.
- Written dissemination, especially paper publications, should focus on the most important news. An understanding of complex developments within society is enhanced through the use of key figures, graphs and explanatory comments.
- Electronic and paper publications will be coordinated. When summary tables and simplified tables appear in paper publications, more detailed tables are available in *Statbank Denmark* or on other electronic medium.
- Users should only have one access point to Statistics Denmark as far as electronic dissemination of statistics and paper publications are concerned. Electronically, statistics can be accessed via our homepage on the Internet, which includes *Statbank Denmark*, electronic publications and Declarations of Contents. Similarly, all paper publications are published by the Dissemination Centre.
- Statistics Denmark's library and information centre is the centre for the dissemination of international statistics in Denmark. This includes statistics from Eurostat, the UN and OECD countries, as well as statistics from a number of other countries. The library is also the main library in Denmark for descriptive statistics, and is part of a network of research libraries.
- In the dissemination of statistical products - with particular reference to *News from Statistics Denmark* - statistical professionalism and communication expertise are regarded as equally important.
- In the dissemination of statistics, only one foreign language, English, is used by Statistics Denmark.
- Erroneous interpretation and misuse of Statistics Denmark's results will be commented by Statistics Denmark as soon as the error comes to light.

**Objectives** Statistics Denmark has set the following objectives for the development and improvement of the dissemination strategy:

36. A *communication policy* will be drawn up and implemented, i.e. a coherent policy for the dissemination of information. The communication policy will contain a new *publishing policy* and guidelines on how to improve the language of our communication.
37. A *new media policy* will be drawn up and implemented with the goal of improving the profile of Statistics Denmark as an invaluable information source for the press and media. We will give journalists the highest quality service customised to their precise needs. We aim to work more closely with the press in the future. The outcome of this should be an increase in media coverage.
38. The statistical information in *Statbank Denmark* will be expanded to contain all official statistics. The functionality will be improved for both expert users and other users.
39. Our homepage on the Internet [www.dst.dk](http://www.dst.dk) will be continuously developed with new data, good search facilities and links, enabling users to find the information they require easily.
40. Dissemination of statistics to the *general public* via Statbank Denmark and our homepage will be considerably increased.
41. A *new periodical*, which gives a broader review of Statistics Denmark's activities and especially news, will be developed.
42. Statistics Denmark will develop and carry out annual *public surveys* of the understanding of the general public towards Statistics Denmark's mission and image in general.
43. Frequent user surveys of Statistics Denmark's telephone service will be carried out with a view to maintain a high quality service.
44. Frequent surveys of *user satisfaction with the library* will be carried out. The development in the services offered by the library will also be measured annually.

