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The Norwegian Statistical System

The Norwegian statistical system is fairly centralised. Statistics Norway produces about 85 percent of all official statistics. A Statistics Council with 18 members comprises other important producers of such statistics. This council has a coordinating role and is headed by Statistics Norway.

The Statistics Act from 1989 covers official statistics in general and Statistics Norway in particular. According to this Statistics Norway is responsible for:

- Mapping and giving priorities to the needs for official statistics.
- Coordinating statistics that are produced by governmental agencies
- Developing statistical methods and exploit statistics for research and analyses.
- Give information for statistical use for research purposes and governmental planning
- Having the main responsibility (on behalf of Norway) for international statistical cooperation.

The Statistics Act also underlines that Statistics Norway is an independent institution when it comes to the content of its statistics and analyses. Statistics Norway decides on an independent basis what the institution shall publish of official statistics, and when and how this shall be done. At the same time data security and the protection of personal integrity are preconditions for trust by the data providers and hence for the work of Statistics Norway.

In addition to Norwegian laws such as the Statistics Act, Statistics Norway's priorities are increasingly governed by acts as a consequence of the cooperation in the European Union through the European Economic Cooperation.

Statistics Norway is organised administratively under the Ministry of Finance and has a board appointed by the Government.

Statistics Norway's activities are financed by basic grants from the state budget and by direct payments from public and private customers for development and adaptation of statistics and analyses (user-funded assignments or commissions). Some on-going statistics are also funded by such assignments. About 30 percent of the total revenue of about 70 millions Euros is covered by assignments (2006).

Statistics Norway has about 950 employees, in two locations (Oslo and Kongsvinger). More than 60 percent have higher education, and more than 50 percent are women.

A relatively large part of Norwegian statistics is covered by data from administrative registers. Access to such data is granted by the Statistics Act.

Statistics Norway's Strategy (from 2007) emphasises the following issues:

- Statistics portray society
- Research of high quality
- Satisfied users and motivated respondents
- Cooperation to improve statistics
- Quality at all levels

Statistics Norway has a fairly large research department within the organisation, carrying out modelling and research based on our data and hence increasing the relevance and quality of these.

Statistics Norway works systematically with quality. The European Code of Practice can serve as a framework also for this work describing the main quality criteria for official statistics.

The user dialogue in Statistics Norway comprises contacts, user groups, courses for users and dissemination. User orientation is in particular visible through the development of ssb.no. All official Norwegian statistics are disseminated for free by the Internet, and it is an objective to reach the general public directly or via different public media. There are therefore journalists employed at Statistics Norway.

Statistics Norway produces about 300 statistics. These give about 800 releases of new statistics on ssb.no annually, according to a release calendar.

For more information: www.ssb.no