

The Norwegian statistics act - a framework for the national statistical system (NSS)

EFTA/UNECE WORKSHOP ON THE GENERIC LAW OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS

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Content of talk :



Official statistics



National programme for official statistics



Coordination and cooperation



Quality – discussion of independence



Data access and data sharing

Background: Recommendation to strengthen the NSS

Amend	the statistical legislation with regard to the definition of the term “official statistics”
Amend	the statistical legislation to strengthen Statistics Norway’s coordination role
Incorporate	the establishment, composition and mandate of the “coordinating body” in the statistical legislation
Strengthen	its coordination of the Other National Authorities producing European statistics in planning and monitoring European statistics actions
Enhance	the institution-wide monitoring system for quality management by implementing regular quality reviews, including documentation updates

What is official statistics?

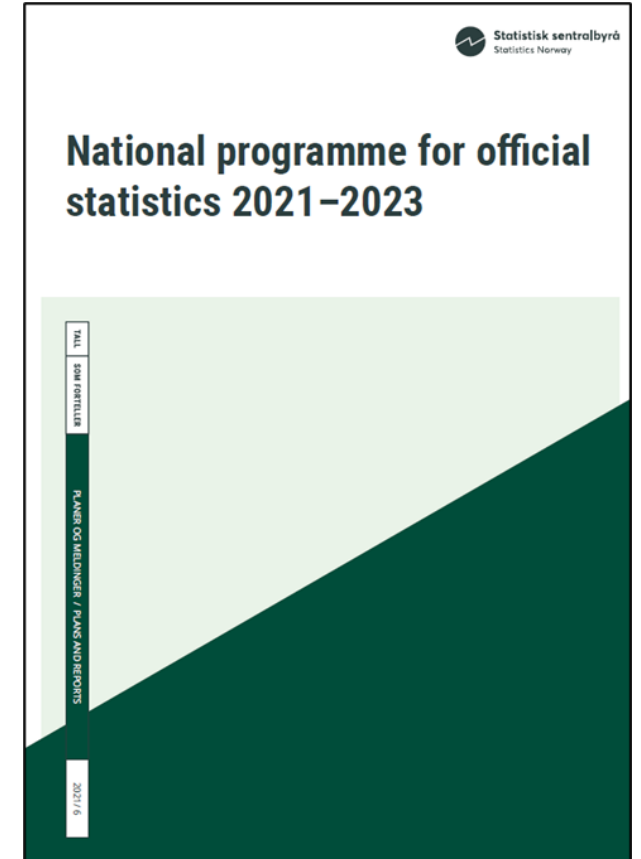


The Statistics Act (2019):

- Section 1. The purpose of the Act is to promote the development, production and dissemination of official statistics with a view to increasing **public knowledge**, and providing a **basis for analysis, research, decision-making, and general discussion** in society.
- Section 4. The King in Council shall approve the establishment of a **multi-year national programme for official statistics** that is suitable for fulfilling the purposes described in section 1. The programme will stipulate **which statistical activities shall be covered and which public authorities are responsible** for the statistics.

National statistics programme

- Multi-year national programme for official statistics
- Stipulate which statistical activities shall be covered and which public authorities are responsible for the statistics
- Defines official statistics and the statistical system
- Provides a frame for Statistics Norway (SSB) to collect and share data
- Better coordination and more efficient use of resources
- Draft prepared by SSB and the committee for official statistics
- Extensive user consultations
- Adopted by the government (the King in Council)



Statistics areas

21 main areas – around 90 sub areas

- Labour market and earnings X
- Banking and financial markets
- Population X
- Construction, housing and property
- Energy and manufacturing X
- R&D, technology and innovation X
- Health and social care X
- Income and consumption
- Culture and recreation
- Agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture X
- National accounts
- Nature, area, climate and environment X
- Public finance
- Prices and price indices
- Social conditions and crime X
- Transport and tourism
- Education X
- International economic relationships
- Elections
- Wholesale and retail trade and service activities
- Establishments, enterprises and accounts

X: Both SSB and other producers are responsible. Other areas: SSB

Section 6: Coordination of official statistics

1. Statistics Norway shall coordinate all development, production and dissemination of official statistics in Norway. Statistics Norway shall produce an annual public report to the Ministry regarding the quality of official statistics.
2. The Ministry shall appoint a committee for official statistics, whose members mainly represent authorities who are responsible for official statistics. The committee shall be led by Statistics Norway. The Ministry may issue regulations relating to the establishment of the committee and its activities.
3. A proposal for a statistics programme shall be drawn up by Statistics Norway, in consultation with the Committee for Official Statistics. The users of statistics shall be consulted before the programme is approved.

The Committee for official statistics

- **Statistics Norway**
- The Register Centre (business registers)
- The Tax Administration
- The Mapping Authority
- **The Labour and Welfare Administration**
- **The Directorate of Immigration**
- **The Directorate of Fisheries**
- **The Agriculture Agency**
- **The Institute of Bioeconomy Research**
- **The Institute of Public Health**
- The Directorate of Health
- The Institute of Occupational Health in Norway
- The Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs
- The Agency for Public and Financial Management
- **The Environment Agency**
- **The Water Resources and Energy Directorate**
- **The Petroleum Directorate**
- **The Communications Authority**
- The Police Directorate
- The Directorate of Correctional Service
- The Public Roads Administration
- The Coastal Administration
- The Directorate for Education and Training
- The Directorate for Higher Education and Skills
- The Research Council of Norway
- The State Housing Bank
- Arts and Culture Norway

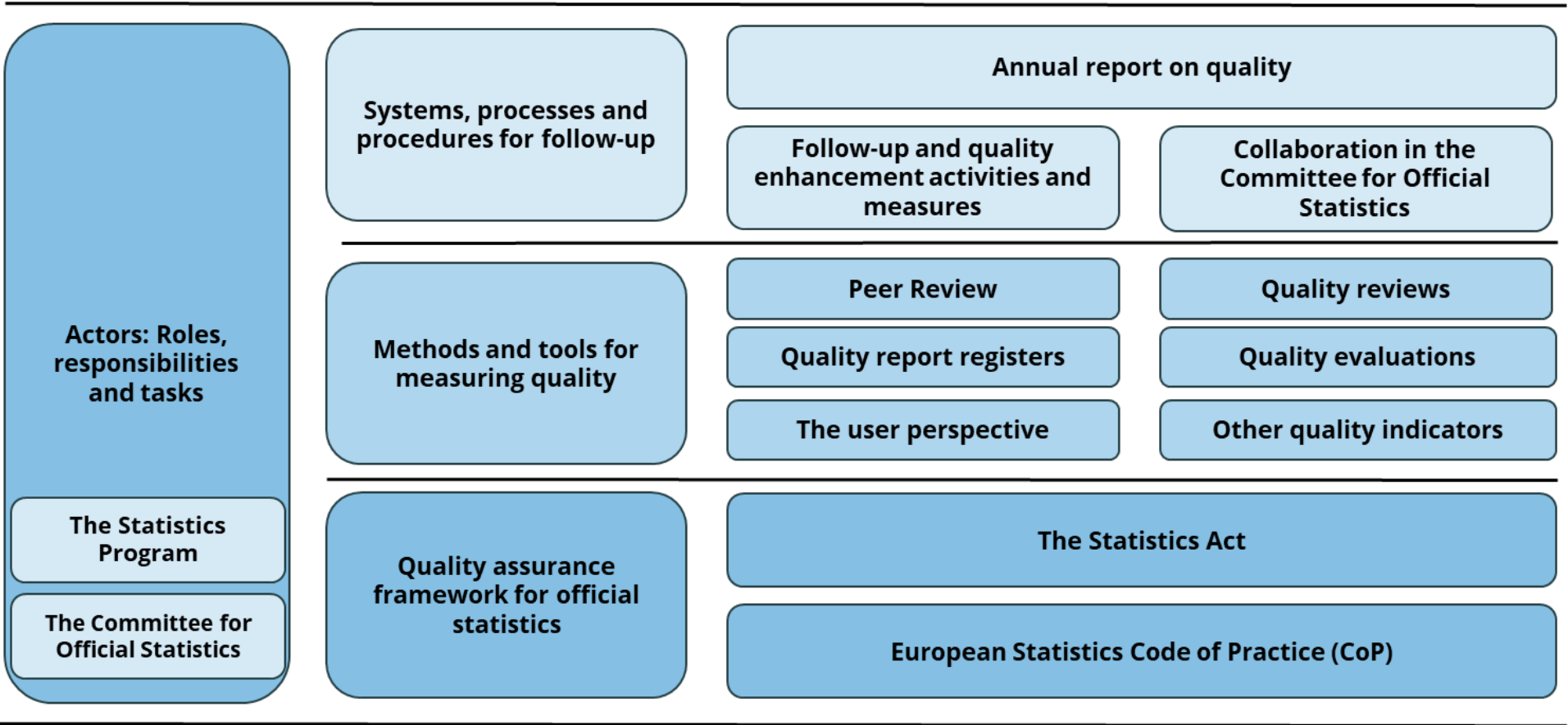
Statistical quality is embedded in the statistics act

Section 5.

- (1) Official statistics shall be developed, produced and disseminated in a **professionally independent, impartial, objective, reliable and cost-effective manner**.
- (2) The development, production and dissemination of official statistics shall be based on **uniform standards and harmonised methods**. The statistics shall be **relevant, accurate, timely, punctual, accessible and clear, comparable and coherent**.
- *Quality monitoring of all official statistics*



The Norwegian system for quality in official statistics



Professionally independence in the Statistics Act



Section 5 (1) Official statistics shall be developed, produced and disseminated in a professional independent, impartial, objective, reliable and cost-effective manner.



Section 18 (1) SSB shall be professionally independent in the performance of all its tasks pursuant to this Act.



The professional independence limits the authority to issue instructions against SSB

How to define professional independence?

- ‘professional independence’,

meaning that statistics must be developed, produced and disseminated in an independent manner, particularly as regards the selection of techniques, definitions, methodologies and sources to be used, and the timing and content of all forms of dissemination, and that the performance of those tasks is free from any pressures from political or interest groups or from Union or national authorities;

(Regulation of the European parliament and of the council of European statistics, art. 2, 1a)

Independence and governance



Statistics Norway is a directorate under the Ministry of Finance



Statistics Norway shall be led by a director general who is appointed by the King in Council, on a six-year contract, with the possibility of reappointment for a second period of up to six years.



Clearer lines of governance by replacing SSB's «board» with an independent advisory council. The director general is empowered to decide on all matters regarding the internal management.

Independence and the statistics programme

- Prop 72 LS:
 - Producers of official statistics are independent regarding **how** statistics are developed, produced and disseminated and can not be instructed by other authorities or politicians or anybody else.
 - Decisions on **what** kind of statistics that shall be produced will be taken by the government and included in the national statistics programme.

Independence – possible dilemmas

Detailed user demands on what may influence also on how?

May SSB reject very detailed user demands?

Is the Government the proper decision institution for the programme?

SSB is still a directorate under the Ministry of Finance which have several functions: important user, governance body, controlling, budget

MoF will decide on guidelines, implementing regulations, nominate institutions to the committee and propose members to the Council

Other producers of official statistics do not have production of statistics as their main task

Access to data - duty to provide information

...any person must provide the data that are necessary to develop, produce or disseminate official statistics if so ordered by Statistics Norway

Any person....

- any private person
- any legal person; trade/industry, public institution

Any information...

- necessary for official statistics
- SSB decides the form in which the information shall be given and the deadline for delivery
- gives access also to administrative data-processing systems and privately held data
- there should be a balance between the benefit from the reporting and the burden placed on the businesses and persons involved



Micro data sharing

Data collected for official statistics should be made accessible for others:

- For other producers of official statistics (background variables) for their official statistics only (not for other data needs) , section 13
- For research and analyses in public planning, section 14
- Public Use Files, section 15

Especially researchers should have easier, more user-friendly and cheaper access. However; confidentiality, privacy and commercial interests in data and trust in SSB must always be taken into consideration

Summary - The statistics act provides the framework for the NSS by:

Establishing a national statistics programme which defines official statistics and which authorities are responsible for official statistics

Establishing the committee for official statistics which is the coordinating body of the NSS and the clarifying the role of Statistics Norway as the central authority

Providing quality principles and criteria for all official statistics and how these should be followed up

Establishing a system for data sharing among the producers of official statistics

Remaining challenges: common platform, financing and prioritisation mechanisms

Thank you!

