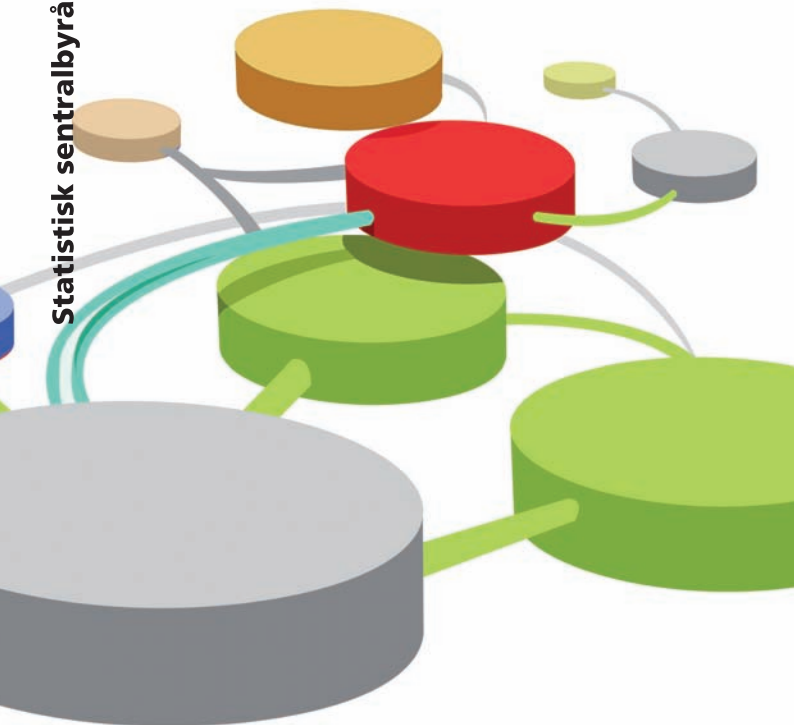




Strategy for data collection



Strategy for data collection

The demand for statistics and public administrative information is increasing, as are the demands on quality in statistics and analyses. At the same time, one of Statistics Norway's goals is to reduce the burden involved in collecting statistical data. The challenge for data collection in Statistics Norway is to collect more information of a higher quality at a lower cost.

Main objectives

The data collection strategy is based on two main objectives:

- more motivated respondents
- data collection of higher quality

In the further development of Statistics Norway's data collection procedures, we will focus on areas where we need to succeed in order to reach the main objectives. We shall be able to measure if the initiatives taken have a positive effect on the critical factors for success.

There is a strong correlation between the two main objectives. More motivated respondents are more likely to report data of high quality, and an institution that is known for high data quality is also more likely to have highly motivated respondents.

Motivated respondents

The respondents' motivation is affected by how time-consuming and difficult it is to find and report the requested data, the benefits involved, and their confidence in the statistics.

The strategic initiatives shall:

- strengthen the effort to utilise existing information sources in the data collection
- reduce the real and perceived response burden in surveys
- better tailor the data collection designs to the qualifications and preferences of the respondents
- communicate in a better way the purpose of the statistics and the benefits of taking part in the data collection
- provide us with a well-functioning support service

Data collection of higher quality

The basis for good data quality is good data collection instruments and procedures. Both day-to-day administration and development projects need to be based on relevant and complete information from the data collection. Both the quality of work processes and the results of our effort to collect data of high quality shall be measured and documented.

The strategic initiatives shall:

- modernise and improve the data collection instruments
- more systematically apply methods that have a positive effect on response rates
- more systematically and effectively follow up respondents and correct errors

Strategic focus areas

Focus on utilising administrative registers

Statistics Norway shall strengthen the cooperation with other public institutions in order to utilise their administrative registers in the production of statistics. Efforts to develop the content and quality of the various statistical population systems are also included in the population management strategy.

Electronic integration between information organisations shall enable Statistics Norway to safeguard high quality and sufficient documentation of public information for statistical purposes, and to ensure that data and metadata are used in an efficient and secure way.

Where relevant, Statistics Norway shall cooperate with register owners on how to measure data quality and develop data collection procedures.

Increasing automated data capture from businesses

We shall increase our efforts to capture data automatically from the respondents' computer systems. This will be done by strengthening our contact with software suppliers, respondents and other collaboration partners.

Statistics Norway shall encourage coordinated data capture from large enterprises that, as far as possible, is adapted to the enterprises' documentation systems and information routines.

Statistics Norway shall also continue to stimulate coordinated reporting across public institutions cf. the objectives of the e-Government projects. We shall play an active part in the future development and use of the public reporting portal Altinn, particularly when it comes to automated and coordinated reporting from the customers' own information systems.

Data collection tailored to the respondents' information sources and preferences

A more systematic combination of various data collection methods shall reduce the amount of data we need to collect in surveys, the response burden and the survey costs.

Statistics Norway's ambition is to carry out user tests of all new questionnaires before they are sent into the field. The testing comprises expert appraisals and interviews with potential respondents. Pilot testing of new surveys shall be considered more often than what has previously been the case. The goal is to offer survey designs that are tailored to the respondents' information sources and preferences.

Improved data collection instruments

The quality of the data collection instruments is vital for the response quality. Statistics Norway's questionnaires and data collection instruments shall be improved. The expertise shall be focused around a smaller range of software that complies with a specification list that has been developed in Statistics Norway. This list will form the basis of future acquisitions and development projects. The coordination with Altinn on data collection from businesses shall be improved. We shall also consider whether Altinn can be used for Kostra reporting.

Coordination of samples

Statistics Norway shall keep sample sizes at a justifiable low level. Samples should be rotated in order to

limit the response burden for the majority of respondents in periods. Statistics Norway will first look at the quality effects of rotating the participation of medium-sized companies in the samples. Although this initiative will not have an effect on the total response burden, it will reduce the burden for individual respondents in certain periods.

Focusing on the benefits of statistics

Statistics Norway shall strengthen its marketing and information activities by focusing on the benefits of statistics and the important role of the respondents in data collection.

Feedback to respondents will be prioritised, and we will actively promote the possibility of reporting via Altinn.

Develop a professional support service

Self-administrative surveys such as web questionnaires and automated data capture from the respondents' data systems make the respondents users of Statistics Norway's information systems. We shall offer support services that are easy to access and in line with the respondents' expectations.

All enquiries shall be logged and how the problems were solved shall be documented in order to increase the expertise and reuse experiences.

Increase response rates and reduce survey errors

Although the current overall response rates are satisfactory, it is a challenge to keep them at a high level in the future.

As far as possible, the technology used to collect data must be tailored to respondents' and data suppliers' access to – and knowledge of – technology. We shall actively take advantage of technology that can be used to collect data from alternative information sources like electronic service systems and third party records.

Statistics Norway will primarily try to reduce non-response by developing better recruitment strategies.

Requests sent to respondents and data suppliers about answering or delivering data electronically, will be electronic. Relevant and effective incentives will be used in voluntary surveys. Tracing systems shall be improved and education in tracing, persuasion and follow up techniques shall be prioritised. Interviewing shall become more efficient and professional and interviewers will be given new tasks and roles in the data collection.

The response figures shall be continuously monitored at a reasonably detailed level in order to balance the resources used with the need for adequate response quality in various strata.

Data collection from Internet sources

We shall monitor the development techniques for automated data collection from the Internet. At the moment such automated data collection is a challenge because the description of the Internet information is only tied to where it is and how it is presented. However, the Internet is moving in the direction of also storing and tracing information according to descriptions of content. Such a development will present new possibilities for Statistics Norway's data collection.

Improved quality management

In order to improve the efficiency and quality of the data collection, we need better and more management information. This information must be generated from the systems that are used to fill in and send in data, and from the systems used to administer interview activities and internal work processes. In addition to keeping control of the resources used during data collection, the management system shall document the response quality and provide relevant process information back to the respondents. Both internal and external respondents should be able to monitor the data collection process.



To be able to document the quality and effects of controls and revisions of collected data, various quality indicators must accompany the collected data. Quality indicators like those listed below shall be introduced and collected systematically:

- register quality
- questionnaire quality
- coverage errors, sample uncertainty, non-response, measurement errors and processing errors

Data from revision and support services will also provide information on the quality of the registers and questionnaires and of the response and data quality.

Management policy

The data collection activity shall be managed in a way that supports the strategic goals.

Measures that aim to improve the data collection shall be documented in a way that eases later evaluations of the effects of the decisions and initiatives taken.

Expertise development

The development of data collection competence is in line with the overall human resource strategy of Statistics Norway, but a few more details are added here.

Multidisciplinary efforts are required to develop and carry out efficient data collection of high quality. In addition to the general statistics competence that is the basis for all statistical products, Statistics Norway must ensure that we have a staff of well-trained survey methodologists,

The scope and quality of the documentation of data collections shall be improved, and it shall be easy to use the documentation as a source of best practice. In order to achieve this, the project management expertise must be strengthened.

Knowledge and the ability to offer professional advice and develop well-designed surveys shall be prioritised; this concerns web questionnaires and other

kinds of electronic communication in particular. User testing expertise shall be strengthened and anchored in the day-to-day operations. In addition, we shall improve our knowledge about recruitment and motivation strategies used in data collection.

The support service shall be strengthened both professionally and technologically, and this service shall become better integrated with the planning and implementation of the surveys.

Statistics Norway shall develop expertise in new data collection methods and technology by cooperating actively with international partners and by developing an internal environment for testing.

Work processes

All-encompassing system solutions shall support the data collection. The solutions shall link different activities to each other and make the distribution and reuse of information easier. In addition, the solutions shall give insight into status and progress, and create relevant management information so that the data collection projects can be followed up in an efficient way. Sampling and data administration shall become more integrated in the data collection.

All enquiries about the data collection services offered by Statistics Norway or about the quality of collected data shall be received and treated in the same way and according to set standards. It shall be easy for people outside Statistics Norway to find out where and how such enquiries shall be made.

Our aim is for data collection of high accuracy with regard to delivery, whereby agreed deliveries take place at the right time with the right quality and the right use of resources.

Satisfied users

Central to the management policy is the focus on the respondents' need for good services and products. Our users' expectations and satisfaction with our services and products will be measured and documented in regular and easily available user surveys.