



Ethics and statistics



Statistics Norway employees shall:

- **Be objective and independent, and use the best methods available such that society has confidence in Statistics Norway's statistics and analyses.**
- **Give priority to developing and disseminating statistics for the good of society. Taking the needs of all users into account, including those who cannot pay for commissions, is vital.**
- **Avoid compiling surveys or disseminating results in such a way that individuals or groups are discriminated.**
- **Comply with the rules on confidential treatment of individual data, and avoid obtaining access to individual data that is not necessary for their work.**
- **Adhere to ethics principles and requirements for quality and integrity in research, as provided for by the Research Council of Norway.**
- **Take responsibility for their own and Statistics Norway's development, and contribute to cooperation and a good working environment.**
- **Contribute to professional debates, both internally and externally.**



Statistics Norway employees are subject to the general and administrative ethical principles and standards that apply to all public administration employees. These relate to values such as openness, loyalty, fairness, reliability, treating others as we wish to be treated ourselves, and adhering to prevailing laws and regulations. In addition to such general, legal and ethical standards, Statistics Norway employees also face special ethical problems in connection with the professional work entailed in statistics and analyses. This applies to what we produce and how the work is carried out.

Statistics Act and international guidelines

Statistics Norway is regulated by its own law – the Statistics Act. The Act states that Statistics Norway is a professionally independent institution, but is subject to overall guidelines and frameworks as determined by Parliament and the Government. The Statistics Act sets out Statistics Norway's rights and obligations as a producer of statistics. It also highlights Statistics Norway's responsibility with regard to coordinating the production of all official statistics in Norway. Statistics Norway also has overall responsibility for the Norwegian contribution to international statistics collaboration.

The production of statistics is also subject to guidelines that are adopted by international consultative bodies. Within the European statistical system, producers of official statistics must adhere to the European Statistics Code of Practice. The UN's principles for the production of statistics also apply.

Protection of privacy and confidentiality

Statistics Norway collects data on individuals and enterprises via questionnaires and from a number of administrative registers. One important principle for all data collection and the storage of data is the obligation to protect privacy and confidentiality. Guidelines are referred to in Statistics Norway's safety manual. Data collected for statistical purposes shall, in general, not be used for administrative purposes. The statutory framework contains clear rules on how data should be treated, and all Statistics

Norway employees must sign a confidentiality agreement. Data on individuals and establishments must be treated in accordance with these rules to ensure that the confidence in Statistics Norway is maintained at a high level.

Ethical guidelines

The ethical guidelines shall be applied in the execution of Statistics Norway's work and the fulfilment of its objectives as provided for in the Statistics Act and Statistics Norway's strategy. «Ethics» is not an easy term to define. A set of guidelines will therefore neither be exhaustive nor give clear answers to all questions that emerge in the various fields of statistics. Statistics Norway employees shall communicate with the professional environment, their employer and colleagues, customers and society in general. Ethical problems often relate to dilemmas where various considerations need to be balanced. In these cases, it is crucial that both the individual and the institution have developed effective methods for discussion and clarification. The ethical guidelines shall contribute to an ongoing discussion on ethical dilemmas entailed in the work of statistics and analyses in Statistics Norway. Employees must report cases of ethical principles not being adhered to. Statistics Norway's management has a special responsibility for ensuring that the ethical guidelines are adhered to.



Statistisk sentralbyrå
Statistics Norway

