

**Statistics Norway**

**Submission to the United Nations Statistics Division Website on  
2010 World Population and Housing Censuses**

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# **Plans for 2010 Population and Housing Census in Norway**

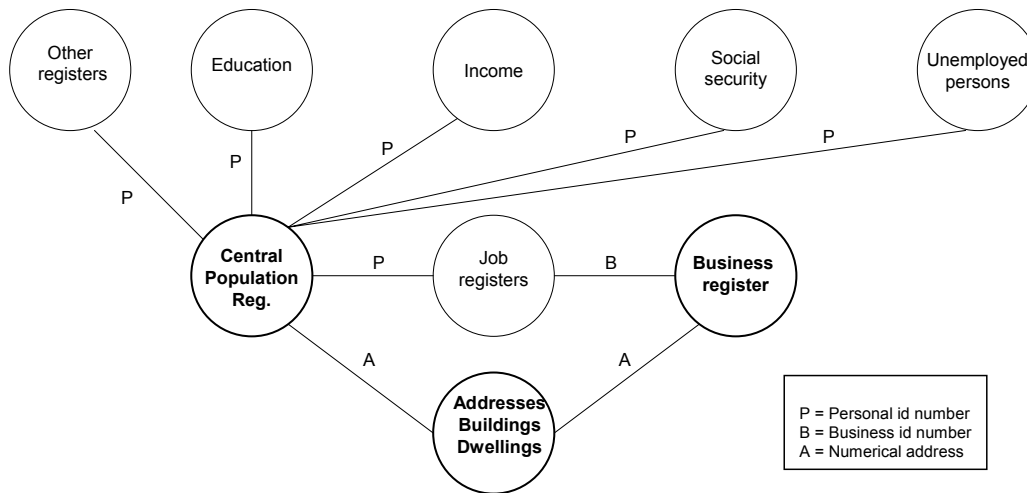
## Plans for 2010 Population and Housing Census in Norway

### Census design

The last fully traditional census in Norway was conducted in 1960. In 1964 the Central Population Register was established, introducing a unique personal identification number. In the following years a number of administrative registers were established, all using the same identification number. Statistics Norway (SN) developed register-based statistics in several fields, and the role of register data in censuses increased over the years. The censuses from 1970 to 2001 were all based on a mixed mode data collection, combining register data and traditional censuses (in 1990 a combination of register data and a sample survey). In 2001 only information on households and dwellings was collected from census forms. The 2010 Census in Norway is expected to be totally register-based.

Data for the 2010 Population and Housing Census will be collected from a register-based statistical system that is common for a number of statistics. The system is built around three basic registers: The Central Population Register, the Business Register and the Register on Addresses, Buildings and Dwellings.

### Data sources for 2010 Population and Housing Census



All statistical units relevant for a census are linked to on another by means of the identification numbers. Persons, families and households in the population register are linked to dwellings and buildings by the residential address. Through job registers employed persons are linked to their place of work in the business register.

In addition to the information contained in the population register, a number of other registers are used in the census: registers on employment (job registers) and unemployment, education, income (taxation registers), social security, and some other registers (for instance on car ownership). In total some 30 major register sources are expected to be used and in addition a number of minor registers.

Even though the census is based on data from registers, most census variables are not directly available in the administrative sources. It is necessary for SN to combine data from different registers and data are further processed to obtain the variables required for censuses. For instance, to construct the variable *employed persons*, data from 11 different registers are used. This is partly because no single register covers all kinds of employment, partly because it is necessary to combine several sources to obtain sufficient data quality.

## **Essential features of population and housing censuses**

*Individual enumeration:* A register is defined as a systematic collection of *unit-level data* organised in such a way that updating is possible. The registers used in Norwegian censuses contain all individuals and dwellings, so the condition of individual enumeration is met.

*Universality within a defined territory:* The census covers the entire country. The population census includes all persons registered as residents in Norway on the census day. The housing census includes all conventional dwellings and institutions, but non-conventional dwellings are not included.

*Simultaneity:* Since all registers are updated regularly, all units can be enumerated at the census day. For labour market characteristics the reference period is the census week, for income characteristics the census year (2010) and for the rest of the characteristics the census day.

*Defined periodicity:* Most of the census variables will be published annually. Complete censuses will be conducted every ten years, normally in years ending in "0" (2001 being the only exception).

## **Necessary conditions for implementing a register-based census**

### *Legal basis*

Legislation provides a key foundation for the use of administrative data sources for statistical purposes. *The Statistics Act (1989)* allows SN to use existing administrative data sources rather than re-collect data for producing statistics. SN is given the right to access administrative data on unit level and to link them for statistical purposes. Furthermore, the Statistics Act and the Act on Processing of Personal Data, provides a detailed definition of data protection.

### *Public approval*

It is very important that the general public appreciates and understands the benefits of using register sources for statistical purposes. In Norway most people believe that the statistical use of register data is rational and they also have strong faith to the SN. An open discussion and debate, explaining the rationale and benefits of register use has always been considered a key principle. Cost efficiency, a reduced response burden on the population and the avoidance of overlap in data collection seem to be good arguments for the statistical use of existing administrative data.

### *Unified identification code systems*

One major factor that facilitates the statistical use of administrative data is the application of unified identification systems across different sources. In Norway unique identification numbers are currently used in all major registers used in production of statistics.

### *Comprehensive and reliable register systems developed for administrative needs*

The compilation of administrative data registers has usually arisen from the needs of the functioning of society and development of administration. It has also been closely tied up with the development of social security, taxation systems and other administrative needs. These are mostly state level systems, and therefore it has been necessary to have state-level registers. Since administrative registers are the basis for many individual rights and duties, it is in the interest for the individual to make sure that all data within administrative registers are accurate. [Further, when in contact with authorities or private companies \(for instance banks\), individuals normally have to give their personal identification number.](#) Such factors speak for the reliability of register data for statistical purposes.

### *Cooperation among administrative authorities*

Developing a register-based statistical system requires firm and explicit commitment from the highest possible level as well as close collaboration among relevant authorities. According to the Statistics

Act, SN must be informed, and even has the right to negotiate with the administrative authorities whenever a register system is established or restructured. The collaboration between SN and the register authorities often takes part in the frame of a national forum of register keepers, but also bilateral.