

# Guidelines issued by the Council for Official Statistics



Statistiska centralbyrån Statistics Sweden



## Sufficient quality and criteria for official statistics

# **Sufficient quality and criteria for official statistics**

Statistics Sweden  
2006

## Sufficient quality and criteria for official statistics

Producer: Statistics Sweden

Inquiries: Gunilla Lundholm  
tfn + 46 8 506 942 76  
gunilla.lundholm@scb.se

Elisabet Andersson  
tfn + 46 8 506 946 45  
elisabet.andersson@scb.se

© 2006, Statistics Sweden

When quoting material from this publication, please state the source as follows:

Source: Statistics Sweden, Sufficient quality and criteria for official statistics

Layout: Ateljén, Statistics Sweden

ISBN 91-618-1330-3

ISBN 978-91-618-1330-8

URN:NBN:SE:SCB-2006-X42OP0602\_pdf

Printed in Sweden

SCB-Tryck, Örebro 2006:08

**T**wenty-five authorities in Sweden are responsible for official statistics. Statistics Sweden is responsible for coordination of the official statistics, and is supported by the Council for Official Statistics, an advisory body that deals with matters of principle regarding the availability, quality and usefulness of the official statistics, as well as issues on facilitating the response process for data providers. The Council also promotes cooperation among the authorities responsible for official statistics.

There are four work groups working for the Council. They handle issues on giving access to microdata, methods, quality, electronic publishing and provision of data. The work groups are led by Statistics Sweden and include members from statistical authorities.

This report has been produced by the work group for methods and quality issues, which comprises representatives from the statistical authorities, the head of Statistics Sweden's central methodology unit and Statistics Sweden's quality coordinator. The head of Statistics Sweden's research and development department is chair. The work group is a permanent one under the Council and directs its work towards issues on methods and quality within the official statistics and their production. Information and competence development are among the main tasks of the work group.

The report deals with the assignment of what is sufficient quality for official statistics, and also contains a set of criteria for this. The report has been prepared by a committee of the work group. Committee members included Mats Bergdahl and Eva Elvers, Statistics Sweden, Ingegerd Jansson, Social Insurance Office, Monica Lindquist, Swedish National Board of Student Aid, and Jens Olofsson, Swedish Institute for Growth Policy Studies. I would like to thank the committee members and all authorities that have participated in discussions and provided comments during the course of the work. I am also grateful to Statistics Sweden's Scientific Council for its valuable viewpoints that have contributed to further improvements. The report was approved during the meeting of The Council for Official Statistics on 21 October 2005.

Stockholm, April 2006

Kjell Jansson  
Chair of the Council for Official Statistics

# Table of contents

---

Summary .....	6
Background .....	6
Quality and quality work.....	7
Concept of quality and quality declaration.....	7
Quality work with planning and follow-up.....	7
Quality work is multifaceted .....	8
Motivation of data providers.....	8
Quality and costs .....	8
Sufficient quality with criteria and commitment .....	9
Sufficient quality for official statistics .....	9
A set of criteria for sufficient quality .....	9
Commitment .....	10
Criteria for sufficient quality .....	11
Proposals for the future .....	15

---

Appendix   Criteria for sufficient quality for official statistics .....	16
--	----

# Summary

---

The work group for methods and quality issues under the Council for Official Statistics has on behalf of the Council produced a clarification on what should be considered “sufficient quality” for official statistics. The work group has also produced a corresponding set of criteria for official statistics.

The work group has presented three proposals for approval, which are described in this report. The Council approved the final version of the report at the meeting on 21 October 2005.

- The clarification of *sufficient quality* for official statistics is: “Official statistics shall have sufficient quality in relation to how they are intended to be used”.
- In connection with this formulation of sufficient quality for official statistics there is a *set of criteria* which are to be fulfilled. The criteria serve both as a clarification of the implications of sufficient quality and as a tool in working with official statistics.
- Each statistical authority can choose to make a *commitment* regarding its own official statistics. This commitment involves working in accordance with the implications of sufficient quality and fulfilling all the applicable criteria. The commitment shall be made to the Secretariat of the Council for Official Statistics, and it shall include information on which year the commitment shall enter into force within the closest three-year period.

## Background

---

Within their own areas of responsibility, each of the statistical authorities determines which statistics shall be published and which subset of the published statistics shall be accompanied with the phrase “Official Statistics of Sweden” and thereby the symbol described in the Official Statistics Act. It is the duty of the statistical authority to see that its statistics are of sufficient quality. This responsibility also applies in those cases where the authority has decided to outsource production of statistics.

The statistical authorities must see that they follow the laws, ordinances and regulations concerning the official statistics. As an aid, the authorities may refer to the general advice and guidelines for the official statistics. All of this available information on official statistics

The work group has also proposed for work to continue. The points below were approved by the Council at the meeting on 25 February 2005.

- The work group for methods and quality issues will be given the assignment to monitor development concerning sufficient quality of official statistics, both from an international and a national perspective. The aim is to continue work within this area over the next few years.
- The work group for methods and quality issues will be assigned to clarify the concept of preliminary statistics.
- After establishing the concept of preliminary statistics, the work group for electronic publishing will be assigned to clear up how the information of the date for releasing the statistics, including the level (publication, table) should be presented on the statistical authorities websites.

In addition to the long-term monitoring, it is important to work with advice and support in the short-term, gathering questions from the statistical authorities and providing feedback. It is also vital to gain information for the future development of this initial approach. The work group for methods and quality issues should be active, particularly in their work with advice and support. The Secretariat of the Council is the intermediary link between the statistical authorities and the work group.

contributes to cooperation and an overall picture of the system. In addition, the quality of statistics normally improves in several aspects such as coherence, availability and clarity. However, more is needed to assure sufficient quality.

The Guidelines for decisions on content and scope of official statistics (confirmed by the Council on 30 October 2003) state: “Statistical authorities determine whether the level of quality is sufficient in relation to how statistics are used.” This statement is now passed on in several respects. This report consistently refer to official statistics. The word “official” is not constantly repeated but is used when needed to emphasize the difference between official statistics and other statistics.

# Quality and quality work

---

## Concept of quality and quality declaration

Within the system of the official statistics, quality is viewed as being user-oriented: quality refers to all characteristics of a statistical product that are of significance concerning how well the statistics fulfil the information needs and expectations of the users. The concept of quality for official statistics is presented in "Quality definition and recommendations for quality declarations of official statistics - Reports on Statistical Coordination (MIS) 2001:1. Statistics Sweden". It consists of five main components:

- Contents
- Timeliness
- Accuracy
- Comparability and coherence
- Availability and clarity

There are also sub-components. Please refer to MIS 2001:1 for further information.

In addition to these quality components concerning statistics, there are other significant components that apply more to the production process than the final product. Some such examples are rules for confidentiality and attention paid to data providers. More information on these examples follows in later sections in this report.

A quality declaration is a description of the quality characteristics of the statistics. The guidelines in MIS 2001:1 refer to quality declarations directed towards users. A user, in a particular situation, should be able to determine if the statistics are relevant and if so, how they can be used. The user's evaluation of quality depends on the quality characteristics and how the user intends to use the statistics. Some users have greater demands for accuracy than others; some value a high degree of detail, while others are satisfied with an overall picture, etc.

The official statistics shall be documented and given a quality declaration according to the Official Statistics Ordinance (2001:100) and according to Statistics Sweden's regulations and general advice for official release, publishing etc. of official statistics (SCB-FS 2006:16).

## Quality work with planning and follow-up

Users may want to make demands for quality of the statistics, in one or more respects. Considering the current viewpoint that it is important to focus on the users, it is vital that statistical authorities pay attention to the needs, desires and viewpoints of the users. Therefore it is necessary to keep an active dialogue with the users to gain knowledge about their needs.

Quantitative measures of quality characteristics are important for statistical authorities, producers and users. If quantitative measures are lacking it is difficult for both the statistical authority and the user to determine if the demands are met or not. In addition, it is particularly important that the users can receive pedagogical descriptions. The contents of the statistics are easy to describe, but it is not easy to measure the relation of the various desires to one another. It is simple to propose measures for accuracy, but it is often difficult to provide estimations. Communicating about accuracy is also often difficult, but it is still important.

The users may differ in their views of the importance of short production time, accuracy, detailed content, unbroken time series, etc. The statistical authority is faced with the difficult task of prioritising what should be done. This report does not take up the matter of how this prioritisation is carried out. However, the criteria presented here can help to facilitate this work.

The quality information needed by the responsible authority and the producer is similar to the quality declaration, but it is more detailed. In addition, information is needed about the statistical production process. It is important to evaluate statistics and statistics production, both regularly and in improvement work that will result in higher quality and/or lower costs. Among other things, evaluations are used for the coming rounds of production. Comparing the resulting quality with the planned quality is an important feature. Consequently, quality work includes recurrent planning, implementation and follow-up of the process and the characteristics of the product.

### Quality work is multi-faceted

Due to the interdependence among the quality dimensions, quality work is multi-faceted and it is complicated to find a balance. In addition, there is no set basis on how to give priority to the invested resources among the various phases of the statistical process.

In "Statistics Canada Quality Guidelines" (fourth edition 2003<sup>1)</sup>) the tasks and complexity of quality work are described as below. There are six quality dimensions which are very similar to the five Swedish main components.

"These dimensions of quality are overlapping and interrelated. There is no general model that brings them together to optimize or to prescribe a level of quality. Achieving an acceptable level of quality is the result of addressing, managing and balancing these elements of quality over time with careful attention to program objectives, costs, respondent burden and other factors that may affect information quality or user expectations. This balance is a critical aspect of the design of the Agency's surveys."

However, it is the responsibility of the statistical authorities to make the necessary adjustments based on the needs of the users and the actual possibilities that are available.

### Motivation of data providers

Data providers and their motivation are important parts in planning and implementing a statistical survey. Motivation influences the will to participate, as well as the quality of the information submitted. Increased motivation can reduce both non-response and measurement errors. A number of factors influence motivation: the purpose of the survey, scope, the sensitivity of the requested information, the method to provide the information, point in time, etc. Data providers and provision of data are thus included in several of the criteria for sufficient quality.

During the meeting on 15 October 2004, the Council for Official Statistics decided to form a work group for issues on the provision of data. The group met for the first time in April 2005. Therefore, issues on motivation of data providers are not further discussed in this report.

### Quality and costs

It costs money to produce statistics, and higher quality normally implies higher costs. The consequences of poor statistical information can be devastating for planning and decision-making. From the perspective of national economy, costs will nearly always be less if the statistics are of sufficient quality.

The correlation between the quality of statistics and costs is complex. There are many aspects of quality, and the relation between quality and costs can change over time, not least through continuous improvement work.

Every time new statistics emerge or changes are made to the existing statistics, the statistical authorities must weigh the needs of the intended users against available funds. In those cases where there are insufficient resources for well-motivated use of statistics, the authority must look for other financing or decide against meeting certain needs of the users.

---

1) [www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/12-539-XIE/](http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/12-539-XIE/)  
(page 7)



# Sufficient quality with criteria and commitment

---

## Sufficient quality for official statistics

The definition of sufficient quality for official statistics in the “Guidelines for decisions on content and scope of the official statistics” has been modified in this report. The definition has been limited to apply to the intended uses of the statistics. It is impossible to be aware of and adapt to all the areas of use. The clarification on what characterises official statistics is:

“Official statistics shall have sufficient quality in relation to how they are intended to be used”

- This is a clear objective that refers to the characteristics of the statistical product.
- The characteristics of the product shall be measured or at least described.
- It puts the responsibility on the statistical authority to determine both which statistics shall be official, and the level of quality the statistics shall have to be of sufficient quality for the intended uses. This implies that the authority must study, assess and prioritise the statistical needs. This applies to the different uses as well as to different user groups including the general public. Costs and appropriation framework must of course also be taken into consideration.
- It puts the responsibility on the authority to plan and implement the production process so that the obtained quality is at least equal to the sufficient quality. This requires active follow-up.
- Through good and necessary communication with users “intended to be used” can satisfy the most important user needs.

In those cases where the authority has chosen to outsource statistics production, it is important that the producer and the authority together plan the implementation of those parts that are to be done by the producer. Follow-up is needed to see that the level of quality is sufficient.

The formulation “Official statistics shall have sufficient quality in relation to how they are intended to be used” gives meaning of the expression “sufficient quality” and is also a statement regarding what applies for “official

statistics”. As a result, the phrase “Official Statistics of Sweden” and the symbol will be associated with sufficient quality. The objective of the phrase and the symbol is to act as a form of quality guarantee; the quality is sufficient for the intended uses.

## A set of criteria for sufficient quality

The authority assesses which parts of their statistics that have sufficient quality and what should be classified as official statistics. However, there are considerable difficulties in measuring some of the important quality aspects. It is thus hard to if not impossible to make completely objective quality assessments. This is one of the reasons why criteria have been established - criteria which to some extent refer to the production process rather than the resulting statistics.

The construction of a set of criteria implies both information for statistics users and an aid for the authority. In order to obtain sufficient quality the authority must work actively with quality issues. The criteria which have been formulated are based on the quality clarification and quality characteristics, the intended use, focus on the users and how the users find the quality to be. The criteria place demands on the quality of the statistics and on factors which have significance for the quality. Since direct quality measurements are not always available, indirect measurements are also included in the criteria. Each criterion has a purpose, and together these criteria constitute a structured support system.

A few of the criteria are directed towards the cycle “Planning – Implementation – Follow-up of the production process” that are constantly going on in regular surveys. The resulting level of quality shall at least be the sufficient level, which can be seen as a minimum. The planned quality level should be chosen from this basis, taking costs into consideration.

Various types of criteria have been discussed, including the type that monthly statistics shall be published within six weeks (a certain time period equal for all), and that if the non-response level is for example over 30%, a non-response study shall be done. These types of criteria have been rejected - it is important to adapt the criteria to the conditions of the individual statistics, the

needs of the users and the intended use. This applies to the requirement for accuracy, for example. In addition to the fact that the intended use shall have a controlling effect on accuracy, there are differences between different types of statistics and between different levels of detail.

The set of criteria is a gross list. For instance, there are differences between using directly collected material and administrative material. This is reflected in partly different applicable criteria. The list with applicable criteria is therefore usually shorter than the gross list.

Some statistics are published in both preliminary and final form. The planned characteristics normally look somewhat different for the quicker preliminary statistics and the slower final statistics. Since the intended use is different, the quality may be sufficient in both cases, and both types of statistics can be official.

The amount of possible statistics based on certain data material is very large. The statistical authority decides what shall be published, and the authority decides which statistics shall be official. The statistics that are produced as official have been assessed by the statistical authority to have sufficient quality for the intended uses. This does not mean that all other statistics that are based on this data material have worse or insufficient quality.

### **Commitment**

Each statistical authority can choose to make a commitment for its official statistics, which implies that work shall be carried out according to the meaning of sufficient quality and that all applicable criteria on the list are fulfilled. This concerns routines for quality work and fulfilment of certain requirements for the produced official statistics.

The statistical authority can further choose the year from which the commitment shall apply (within the closest three-year period). If that date is further in the future, the authority shall wait with its commitment.

The statistical authority determines if the quality fulfils the level of quality that has been decided to be sufficient. The level may need adjustment over time, with consideration to changed and new user needs. The follow-up and any adjustments should of course be done based on contacts with users. It may be necessary with both a quick evaluation before publishing, and a more comprehensive evaluation before the next statistics production round. The form of the work and the follow-up is determined internally by the authority. It is important that the authority has established routines for this work.

The Council will make annual follow-ups of the scope of commitments and experiences of the use of commitments and criteria.

# Criteria for sufficient quality

The criteria have been structured into three groups:

- Laws, ordinances and regulations that steer the official statistics
- Contacts with users
- Planning - Implementation - Follow-up

The following three tables act as a checklist for the important stages in a production process which leads to statistics of sufficient quality. A positive answer (=“yes” or “not applicable”) for all points is usually taken as a justification that the statistics are of sufficient quality.

The checklist is thus called criteria for sufficient quality. However, in some exceptional cases the assessment “insufficient quality” may be adequate even though positive answers have been given. In turn, “sufficient quality” may be given, despite shortcomings for one or more of the criteria. Since the commitment is on the level of the authorities, the criteria are formulated as such. Among other things, this means that most of the items are expressed in the plural form. An adaptation for an individual statistic product must be made; for example, one or more measuring instruments may exist.

## Laws, ordinances and regulations that regulate the official statistics

Laws, ordinances and regulations are binding and shall be complied with if the statistics are to be official. No further explanation or Reason is needed for this group. EU regulations have been placed in the group called

Planning, implementation and follow-up, since they have a direct orientation towards the design of individual statistics.

Fulfilled	Criterion	Explanation	Reason
	Relevant laws are known and complied with.	–	–
	Relevant ordinances are known and complied with.	–	–
	Relevant regulations are known and fulfilled.	–	–
	Current descriptions of the statistics with quality declarations are available according to the template, MIS 2001:1.	Current descriptions of the statistics shall be available, according to SFS 2001:100 and Statistics Sweden FS 2002:16.	All official statistics shall include a quality declaration according to MIS 2001:1. Since the document is particularly important in communications with the users, this is a separate criterion.

## Criteria for sufficient quality

### Contacts with users

Contacts with users comprise a particular group of criteria for several reasons. It is the users who shall assess the quality of the statistics. The criteria of the group are partly a formalisation of contacts – both as an aid for the

statistical authorities and for the sake of transparency. If the procedure is transparent, it is easier for the users to influence the statistics. Please note that the four criteria are dependent on one another.

Fulfilled	Criterion	Explanation	Reason
	Objectives of the statistics are clearly formulated.	It shall be clearly stated for what and how the statistics are intended to be used.	Since the official statistics must have sufficient quality in relation to how they are intended to be used, this must be clearly stated.
	The main users and their main areas of use and future needs are documented.	The responsible authority shall see that a current overview is available, consisting of the requested information about the main users, their main areas of use and future needs. This overview shall be clear and concise.	The overview shall ensure that the authority has a clear picture of the needs, and shall serve as a basis that the statistics are designed as they are. The reason that the overview shall include present areas of use and future needs is because there might be a contradiction between the two. This overview may be of importance if statistical authorities are confronted with such a choice.
	The planned characteristics of the statistics are based on a dialogue with the main users.	In planning the characteristics of statistics, the responsible authority shall in a dialogue with the users test the quality of the statistics, and user needs shall be of great importance when designing the statistics. Among other things, it is important for the authority to take part in the pedagogically difficult dialogue concerning the users' needs/demands regarding accuracy of the statistics. This dialogue is especially important if the characteristics of the statistics are changed in the future. The authority must consider restrictions such as costs and response burden, as well as other considerations that are of importance.	The quality of the statistics is determined by how well they fulfil the needs of the users. In order for the quality to be high, the authority must base the planned characteristics of the statistics on the results of an active dialogue with the main users.
	Annual follow-up of the quality of the statistics is conducted with the main users and the follow-up is documented.	Follow-up shall be done in the form of annual user councils or similar and shall be documented. The purpose is to see how well the statistical needs of the users are met, and to gather any needs for future changes. All the points in this list of criteria should be taken up. The structure in MIS 2001:1 is suitable for quality follow-up.	To obtain proposals for improvements on statistics and engage in long-term planning for future needs, follow-up must be systematised. It is important that annual follow-ups are carried out between the statistical authority and the users to have a continuous dialogue.

### Planning – Implementation – Follow-up

Criteria for the group Planning - Implementation - Follow-up focus on factors which have significance on the quality of the final statistics and the provision of data. The latter is significant in itself from a perspective of national economy and for accuracy. In the planning stage, the intended quality characteristics shall be “translated” to a suitable production process regarding for example

(if relevant): frame, sample size and sampling procedures, follow-up of non-response, editing routines and comparison with other data sources. Quality studies shall be done regularly with consideration towards needs and costs. Evaluations and feedback are particularly important in surveys that are conducted on a regular basis.

Fulfilled	Criterion	Explanation	Reason
	Relevant EU regulations are given and complied with.	References to EU regulations shall be available in connection with the statistics.	EU regulations are binding by law, but since they are a decisive precondition upon planning of the statistics and production, they are placed here. The regulations must be relative to the other criteria under this heading.
	Relevant classifications and standards are given and complied with.	References shall be available in connection to the statistics. Example: Swedish Standard Industrial Classification, Swedish Standard Classification of Education, Swedish Standard Classification of Occupations	Using statistics together with other statistics is facilitated by following the available classifications and standards.
	The choice of statistical methods can be motivated based on scientific principles.	The choice of methods is based on well established and scientifically documented principles.	Scientific principles are one of several ways to achieve objectivity and convey confidence. See e.g. UN’s ten fundamental principles and EU’s Code of Practice.
	Possibilities to use other available sources of data have been studied and documented.	Prior to selecting the use of direct collection, possibilities to completely or partly use administrative data and/or other available data sources shall have been investigated.	If it is possible to use already collected data, costs for data collection will be lower and the burden on data providers will be less.
	The collection methods have been chosen with consideration to the possibilities, needs and desires of the data providers.	The statistical authority must know about the possibilities, needs and desires of data providers, which shall in turn be met as far as possible when choosing the collection method. Adjustments must be made to other prerequisites for statistics production.	This will increase the opportunities and motivation for data providers to contribute information. This criterion is of importance, both to reduce non-response and to increase accuracy of the collected data. Motivation of data providers is vital for the quality of statistics.
	Provision of data is reasonably distributed among data providers.	If possible, the sample should be planned so that an individual object contributes in a reasonable number of occasions and in a reasonable number of surveys at the same time. The accuracy of the statistics shall be taken into consideration, and this reduces the possibilities of an even burden.	This is one of the ways to facilitate the provision of data and influence the perceived burden among data providers.

## Criteria for sufficient quality

Fulfilled	Criterion	Explanation	Reason
	The amount of time and costs spent by data providers has been estimated.	An estimation shall be made with regard to the data providers' access to data and the method of data collection (postal survey, interview etc.). Estimation can be made through the knowledge that the statistical authorities have on the inputs of the data providers, and it should normally not require any special studies.	Data for official statistics shall be collected in such a way as to make the response process as simple as possible for data providers. Follow-up of the burden on data providers pushes for measures and shows results.
	Measurement instruments are professionally designed and tested.	Measurement instruments shall be examined and/or tested by experts, both with regard to formulation and layout. Examination and testing shall be documented.	Measurement instruments are of great significance for the response propensity and the potential to provide correct information. A well conducted test of the measurement instrument before the actual survey prevents problems with non-response and measurement error, and is an effective way to improve both the production processes and the quality of statistics.
	The publishing schedule is made available in advance.	The publishing schedule shall be decided in advance and made available in a publishing plan. If publishing is delayed, a new publishing schedule shall be given as soon as the delay is certain.	Users shall be able to plan their work at an early stage and know when the needed information will be available. Everyone shall have the same knowledge and possibilities to use the statistics for decision-making, general information, investigative activities and research.
	Quality studies are done regularly.	Studies on quality shall be planned for and done regularly to gain knowledge about the quality of the statistics and for feedback for planning. This can apply to sub-processes in statistics production, comparative studies etc. The results are documented and contribute to Description of the Statistics. The scope and type of action shall be adapted to each individual case.	One purpose is to increase knowledge about quality of the different components, especially those that are difficult to measure. Another is to form a basis for improvements that can lead to higher quality and/or reduced costs.
	The surveys have been planned and conducted to at least obtain the sufficient level of quality, and this has been documented.	The producer and the responsible authority shall have documentation that shows how the statistics production process has been planned and conducted to obtain the planned quality characteristics.	In order to obtain the planned quality characteristics, it is necessary to plan the entire statistics production process from a total perspective. The fact that all parts affect the final statistics has been given consideration, and resources have been allocated on this basis.
	The statistics have been assessed to be of sufficient quality in the follow-up.	After the production round has been carried out, a follow-up is made with an assessment of quality characteristics, comparing these with the level of sufficient quality and with the planned characteristics. The statistical authorities shall have a formal procedure for this. Slight deviations are allowed, particularly if they are followed by improvement work.	It is the outcome of quality characteristics that is important; the level of sufficient quality shall be obtained. This applies to all characteristics and all production rounds.

## Proposals for the future

---

In the short-term perspective it is important to work with advice and support, gathering up questions from authorities and giving feedback. It is also vital to obtain a basis for the future development of this approach. The work group for methods and quality issues should be active, particularly in their work with advice and support. The Secretariat of the Council is the intermediary link between the statistical authorities and the work group.

After the criteria have been used for a few years, preparations should begin for the next step. More focus should then be given on international experience. For example, the European statistical system has probably developed more quality indicators which could be valuable for the continued work. In addition, Eurostat has announced ideas about "a label for European Official Statistics" in May 2005, pointing to the ongoing activities of Office for National Statistics (ONS) in the UK and Statistics Sweden. Consequently, there are several reasons and possibilities for international cooperation.

More experience is needed in the classification of levels of quality. This subject was brought up during the Council meeting on 15 October 2004, expressing the desire for a classification of levels that would include more than the two possibilities to fulfil or not fulfil the criteria. One idea would be to use a scale from 1 to 5, where 3 corresponds to fulfilled criteria. This would allow support for gradual development of quality work,

rather than to introduce a comparison instrument. Alternatively, the present design could be expanded to include for instance check lists that give more information on the "how, when and so forth". Statistics Sweden's Scientific Council has also recommended a similar scale or a classification of levels of quality. This is something that should be taken into consideration in the future.

In May 2005 a "Code of Practice" for the European statistical system was adopted. The purpose is to assure quality of European statistics and will thus have considerable influence on those aspects of the Swedish statistical system. Extensive work is now being done on the EU level to define the integral principles and to support implementation in the member countries. Future studies should be made on how the "Code of Practice" and the criteria for sufficient quality are related and can be coordinated.

# Criteria for sufficient quality for official statistics

---

## Laws, ordinances and regulations that steer the official statistics

- Relevant laws are known and complied with.
- Relevant ordinances are known and complied with.
- Relevant regulations are known and fulfilled.
- Current descriptions of the statistics with quality declarations are available according to the template, Quality definition and recommendations for quality declarations of official statistics – Reports on Statistical Coordination (MIS) 2001:1, Statistics Sweden.

## Contacts with users

- Objectives of the statistics are clearly formulated.
- The main users and their main areas of use and future needs are documented.
- The planned characteristics of the statistics are based on a dialogue with the main users.
- Annual follow-up of the quality of the statistics is conducted with the main users and the follow-up is documented.

## Planning – Implementation – Follow-up

- Relevant EU regulations are given and complied with.
- Relevant classifications and standards are given and complied with.
- The choice of statistical methods can be motivated based on scientific principles.
- Possibilities to use other available sources of data have been studied and documented.
- The collection methods have been chosen with consideration to the possibilities, needs and desires of the data providers.
- Provision of data is reasonably distributed among data providers.
- The amount of time and costs spent by data providers has been estimated.
- Measurement instruments are professionally designed and tested.
- The publishing schedule is made available in advance.
- Quality studies are done regularly.
- The surveys have been planned and conducted to at least obtain the sufficient level of quality, and this has been documented.
- The statistics have been assessed to be of sufficient quality in the follow-up.



**Swedish Work Environment Authority**

SE-171 84 Solna  
Phone: +46 8 730 90 00  
Fax: +46 8 730 19 67  
www.av.se

**National Council for Crime Prevention**

Box 1386, SE-111 93 Stockholm  
Phone: +46 8 401 87 00  
Fax: +46 8 411 90 75  
www.bra.se

**Swedish National Board of Student Aid**

SE-851 82 Sundsvall  
Phone: +46 60 18 60 00  
Fax: +46 60 18 61 91  
www.csn.se

**National Courts Administration**

SE-551 81 Jönköping  
Phone: +46 36 15 53 00  
Fax: +46 36 16 57 21  
www.dom.se

**Swedish National Financial Management Authority**

Box 45316, SE-104 30 Stockholm  
Phone: +46 8 690 43 00  
Fax: +46 8 690 43 50  
www.esv.se

**Swedish Financial Supervisory Authority**

Box 6750, SE-113 85 Stockholm  
Phone: +46 8 787 80 00  
Fax: +46 8 24 13 35  
www.fi.se

**National Board of Fisheries**

Box 423, SE-401 26 Göteborg  
Phone: +46 31 743 03 00  
Fax: +46 31 743 04 00  
www.fiskeriverket.se

**Social Insurance Office**

103 51 Stockholm  
Phone: +46 8 786 90 00  
Fax: +46 8 411 27 89  
www.forsakringskassan.se

**Swedish National Agency for Higher Education**

Box 7851, SE-103 99 Stockholm  
Phone: +46 8 563 085 00  
Fax: +46 8 563 085 50  
www.hsv.se

**Swedish Institute for Growth Policy Studies**

Studentplan 3, SE-831 40 Östersund  
Phone: +46 63 16 66 00  
Fax: +46 63 16 66 01  
www.itps.se

**Swedish Chemicals Inspectorate**

Box 2, SE-172 13 Sundbyberg  
Phone: +46 8 519 411 00  
Fax: +46 8 735 76 98  
www.kemi.se

**National Institute of Economic Research**

Box 3116, SE-103 62 Stockholm  
Phone: +46 8 453 59 00  
Fax: +46 8 453 59 80  
www.konj.se

**National Mediation Office**

Box 1236, SE-111 82 Stockholm  
Phone: +46 8 545 292 40  
Fax: +46 8 650 68 36  
www.mi.se

**Swedish Environmental Protection Agency**

SE-106 48 Stockholm  
Phone: +46 8 698 10 00  
Fax: +46 8 20 29 25  
www.naturvardsverket.se

**Swedish National Debt Office**

SE-103 74 Stockholm  
Phone: +46 8 613 45 00  
Fax: +46 8 20 81 37  
www.rgk.se

**Swedish Forest Agency**

SE-551 83 Jönköping  
Phone: +46 36 15 56 00  
Fax: +46 36 16 61 70  
www.skogsstyrelsen.se

**National Board of Health and Welfare**

SE-106 30 Stockholm  
Phone: +46 8 555 530 00  
Fax: +46 8 555 532 52  
www.socialstyrelsen.se

**Swedish Energy Agency**

Box 310, SE-631 04 Eskilstuna  
Phone: +46 16 544 20 00  
Fax: +46 16 544 20 99  
www.stem.se

**Swedish Institute for Transport and Communications Analysis**

Box 17213, SE-104 62 Stockholm  
Phone: +46 8 506 206 00  
Fax: +46 8 506 206 10  
www.sika-institute.se

**Swedish Board of Agriculture**

SE-551 82 Jönköping  
Phone: +46 36 15 50 00  
Fax: +46 36 19 05 46  
www.sjv.se

**Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs**

Box 7843, SE-103 98 Stockholm  
Phone: +46 8 519 264 00  
Fax: +46 8 519 264 99  
www.kulturradet.se

**National Agency for Education**

Alströmergatan 12, SE-106 20 Stockholm  
Phone: +46 8 52 73 32 00  
Fax: +46 8 24 44 20  
www.skolverket.se

**Statistics Sweden**

Box 24 300, SE-104 51 Stockholm  
Phone: +46 8 506 940 00  
Fax: +46 8 661 52 61  
www.scb.se

**Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences**

SE-901 83 Umeå  
Phone: +46 90 786 58 00  
Fax: +46 90 77 81 16  
www.slu.se

**Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth**

SE-117 86 Stockholm  
Phone: +46 8 681 91 00  
Fax: +46 8 19 68 26  
www.nutek.se



## Council for Official Statistics

In February 2002, the Council for Official Statistics was formed at Statistics Sweden with the purpose to handle fundamental issues on official statistics. Availability, quality, usefulness and ways to facilitate submitting information are some examples of these issues. Moreover, the Council works to increase cooperation with statistical authorities.

### Contact persons at the Secretariat of Council for Official Statistics:

Gunilla Lundholm  
 Director General's Office  
 +46-8-506 942 76  
 gunilla.lundholm@scb.se

Elisabet Andersson  
 Director General's Office  
 +46-8-506 946 45  
 elisabet.andersson@scb.se

ISBN 91-618-1330-3  
 ISBN 978-91-618-1330-8  
 URN:NBN:SE:SCB-2006-X4ZOP0602\_pdf