

The System of Official Statistics in Sweden

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Abstract: In accordance with the Swedish Constitution, government authorities in Sweden have an independent role vis-à-vis the government. The task of a government authority is to translate political decisions reached by the Parliament and the government into practical action.

In the middle of the 1990s a reform was implemented of Sweden's official statistics, 25 government authorities were given responsibility for official statistics. On 1 July 1994 much of the responsibility for official statistics in defined sectoral areas was transferred from Statistics Sweden to 24 other government authorities. Statistics Sweden continued to be responsible for multi-sectoral statistics, while other authorities were made responsible for other parts of the statistics.

One of the main purposes of the 1994 statistical reform was to give the users more influence over the statistics. It was expected that the reform would result in the statistics having greater relevance to their users, that the statistical system would be more flexible and that the efficiency of statistics production would improve.

In 1998 an evaluation was performed, which showed that official statistics continued to function efficiently. However, coordination and the overall view of the statistical system had worsened. The evaluation report recommended that a council be established for Sweden's official statistics to improve coordination and the overall view of the statistical system. A Council for Official Statistics was duly established at Statistics Sweden in 2002.

This paper presents three facets of the system:

- The role and responsibility of the Council;
- The structure of the statistical system; and
- The cooperation within and improvement of the system.