

Statistics Denmark

Statistics Denmark is Denmark's central statistical office and is responsible for the co-ordination of all official statistics concerning Denmark and Danish society. These statistics cover a broad spectrum of topics within the areas of population, business, industry, the environment and the economy.

Statistics has a long history in Denmark where the first population census was conducted in 1769. In 1850 Statistics Denmark was established as an institution, and the foundations of its present day activities are to be found in the *Act on Statistics Denmark*, which was adopted by Parliament in 1966. This Act gives an independent Board of Governors the responsibility to determine the institution's work programme. One important provision in the act is that it allows Statistics Denmark access to data from all public administrative registers in Denmark. These have now become the institution's principle data source.

Reception



(Photo: John Duurloo)

Centralised
production of
statistics

In comparison with many other countries the production of statistics in Denmark is highly centralised. There are however other national suppliers of statistics than Statistics Denmark, such as municipal authorities and other government departments. But Statistics Denmark is responsible for ensuring that the overall statistical picture is complete and coherent regardless of the source. The centralised organisation of official statistics means that most Danish government departments rely on Statistics Denmark for statistics relating to their particular sphere of competence.



The mission and the objectives for the institution have been formulated in the strategy paper *Strategy 2005*. Here the overall mission of the institution is stated as follows:

“Our mission is to produce and disseminate all trustworthy statistics on social and economic trends in society, which are an essential condition for its democracy and economy to work”

In the same paper it is stated that we produce statistics in order to enable:

- Danish citizens to acquire a trustworthy picture of society
- Politicians, the business community, public agencies and other organisations to monitor developments within society; to analyse them and obtain trustworthy information upon which rational decisions can be based
- The media and educational institutions to relay trustworthy information on developments, patterns and changes within Danish society
- Researchers to carry out empirical studies on social and economic trends
- The EU and other international cooperation to base activities on readily comparable statistics

The *Act on Statistics Denmark* gives an independent Board of Governors the responsibility to determine the institution’s work programme, thus allowing Statistics Denmark to operate independently of Government control.

The Director General is the chairman of the Board. The other members are appointed by the Minister for Economic Affairs for four-year terms. Budget planning falls within the Minister’s jurisdiction, but it is the Board which has the final say when it comes to prioritising the tasks in the statistical production.

To assist in setting these priorities the Board has established a number of advisory committees comprising both users and suppliers of statistical information. The advice of the committees carries much weight when changes in existing statistics, or plans for new statistics, are being considered. However, the Board has to consider overall budget restraints and the final decision still lies with the Board.

The Act on Statistics Denmark grants access to the basic data necessary to produce the statistics. The Act states that public authorities must supply the information they possess when requested to do so by Statistics Denmark. Decisions on this must be settled by the Board. The private sector is also obliged to supply information for statistical purposes.

The Act on Statistics Denmark aims to reduce the burden of response involved in the submission of statistical data by stating that as far as possible statistics should be based on information already collected by other public authorities. This is the justification for Statistics Denmark's access to data in administrative registers. In addition, the Act states that public authorities responsible for administrative registers must consult Statistics Denmark to ensure that registers are appropriately organised for secondary use in statistics.



(Photo: John Duurlo)

In accordance with these principles, Statistics Denmark has striven to develop a statistical system which is almost entirely based on the administrative registers of other public offices. Other collection methods are employed where necessary, but are only regarded as a supplement.

It is a basic principle that all information on individual persons and business units be treated in strict confidentiality. Only aggregated figures may be passed on to users and the basic information collected by Statistics Denmark is protected by strong data security measures.

The programme of official statistics and the service activities are described below under the following headings:

- Social Statistics
- Business Statistics
- Economic Statistics
- User Services
- The Central Business Register

