UNITED NATIONS STATISTICAL COMMISSION and
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE (ECE)
CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION
STATISTICAL OFFICE OF THE
EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (EUROSTAT)

ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC
COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD)
STATISTICS DIRECTORATE

Joint ECE/Eurostat/OECD Meeting on the Management of Statistical Information Systems (MSIS)
(Geneva, 17-19 May 2004)

Topic (ii): Development of IT strategies in statistical offices

THE IT POLICY OF STATISTICS SWEDEN

Supporting Paper

Submitted by Statistics Sweden[1]

I.   INTRODUCTION

1.   A new IT organization was established at Statistics Sweden in July 2000. In order to elucidate roles and responsibilities an IT-policy was stipulated in June 2002. This policy covers IT activities at Statistics Sweden, including activities focusing on systems development and methods, as well as IT activities during the actual statistics production**.**

2.   The overall goals of Statistics Sweden's IT policy are:
   -   to develop, produce and disseminate statistics for the needs of users and customers;
   -   to coordinate and support the Swedish system for official statistics;
   -   to contribute actively to international statistical cooperation.

3.   Statistical information is produced and made available through various types of statistical information systems, e.g. statistical sample surveys, total population surveys, and register-based systems. Statistics Sweden's IT organization develops, handles and maintains the IT part of these systems.

4.   Statistics Sweden's IT infrastructure shall be designed to efficiently support the statistics production process and the related internal and external communication needs. IT activities shall have the following overall goals: stability, security and efficient operations. The annual IT plan contains an updated IT strategy that supplements the IT strategy.

5.   Statistics Sweden's IT activities shall be determined by the needs of statistics production. IT activities shall be conducted according to Statistics Sweden's own standards and principles as well as external generally

---

[1] Prepared by Per Cronholm (per.cronholm@scb.se)

accepted ones. IT activities shall contribute to attaining Statistics Sweden's goals for the work environment. IT activities shall include active monitoring of the rest of the world to provide a basis of long-term planning required allowing Statistics Sweden to benefit from new technology. Statistics Sweden shall employ IT staff in sufficient numbers with sufficient competence to cover its normal needs, but external consultants may be used occasionally should the need arise.

II.   IT CONTENT AND APPLICATION

A.   Statistics Sweden's IT organization and division of responsibility

6.   Statistics Sweden's IT organization, implemented on 1 July 2000, is decentralized and exists on three levels:
- the central level, through the IT unit;
- the departmental level, through the seven IT functions;
- the programme level, through the IT personnel in the programmes.

7.   *The IT council,* consisting of the departmental level IT managers, shall form Statistics Sweden's IT organization steering committee. The council shall also act as advisers to the IT Director, Head of the IT Unit.

8.   *The IT unit* shall be responsible for strategic IT competence. It shall be responsible for general methodology work and production of standards and recommendations through the coordination of Statistics Sweden's IT activities. The IT unit shall also be responsible for coordinating operations with the outsourcing partner, and making sure that the infrastructure meets the development and production requirements. Furthermore, the IT unit shall actively participate in international cooperation. Finally, the IT unit shall be responsible for dissemination of information, human resources development and training in the area of IT.

9.   *The IT functions* shall coordinate IT development within each respective department/equivalent, spread and enforce the standards and recommendations, and assist the programmes with system and program development.

10.   *IT personnel* in the programmes shall mainly be responsible for development of production systems and be first-hand support to statistics production.

B.   Infrastructure

11.   The IT infrastructure includes all equipment and software required as a basis for development and operations of Statistics Sweden's computer-based statistics production and administration. External communication through the Internet or dedicated connections is also included. The infrastructure shall form a stable ground for Statistics Sweden's IT activities. It shall provide good conditions for both operations and development

12.   Taking the operational requirements into consideration, Statistics Sweden shall choose the most effective solutions for its IT infrastructure. With the exception of certain communication services, Statistics Sweden shall own its IT infrastructure. The infrastructures in Statistics Sweden's locations in Stockholm and Örebro shall, in principle, be equal, considering the current security demands. Statistics Sweden shall apply current approved or de-facto standards to the construction of the infrastructure. Whenever possible, in-house or proprietary solutions shall be avoided. Statistics Sweden shall use standardized functions and techniques for data communication.

C.   General work methodology

13.   The IT unit is responsible for Statistics Sweden's general IT methodology work aimed at making recommendations and standards. The work is often conducted as projects and in close cooperation with

Statistics Sweden's methodology organization and other parts of Statistics Sweden's IT organization. The IT unit also actively partakes in international methodology work. Statistics Sweden's general methodology work shall provide effective methods and tools for the various phases in the process of statistics production. Methods and tools to facilitate the respondent's tasks and the statistics user's activities are of special importance.

14.   The IT unit shall follow the development within the IT area by actively monitoring the rest of the world to make sure that new methods and techniques that could be advantageous to Statistics Sweden are monitored and evaluated. Exchange of experience and cooperation within Statistics Sweden and with other statistics offices shall be a means. All development of statistics production systems at Statistics Sweden shall be carried out according to a joint systems development model that gives active support to systems developers. Statistics Sweden shall normally use standard/commercial software for IT activities. Statistics Sweden shall have a set of recommended tools for each stage of statistics production.

D.   IT skills

15.   Statistics Sweden shall have at its disposal sufficient IT skills to run production and development efficiently. All employees at Statistics Sweden shall have sufficient IT skills to efficiently and professionally conduct their job duties and have a good command of the current office information systems at Statistics Sweden. Each part of Statistics Sweden shall have access to the skills necessary to carry out the tasks emanating from their particular responsibilities. External consultants may be used to meet special needs. Statistics Sweden employees shall continually develop their IT skills. Special consideration shall be given to maintaining and further developing the expert skills needed in various IT areas.

E.   Operations and administration

16.   Operation activities include operations and administration of Statistics Sweden's IT infrastructure. This includes monitoring, installation, maintenance and administration of equipment, maintenance of supported software, back up of data, etc., as well as user support within these areas. The goal is to provide a stable and cost-effective production environment. The day-to-day operations at Statistics Sweden are outsourced. The IT unit is responsible for operations to function according to the contract. The operations organization shall see that sufficient capacity is available to meet the changing needs.

F.   Security and confidentiality

17.   Security and confidentiality are regulated by special security regulations and a confidentiality policy. The policy shown here only aims at giving an overall framework within the IT policy. The goal is to guarantee that data in the broad sense is not unduly distorted or lost, and is protected against unauthorized access. Data and equipment in Statistics Sweden's network shall be reliably protected against unauthorized access, viruses and other unpredictable events. This also applies to data that is sent via an external network from respondents or to statistics recipients.

III.   CONCLUSIONS

18.   The IT unit, a part of Statistics Sweden's Research and Development department, is responsible for this IT policy after consultation with the IT Council. The IT unit is responsible for the promotion of the policy. The promotion will be carried out through the networks and groups that have been formed and associated with the IT Council. It is up to the IT functions of the departments, the Finance unit, the Surveys unit, and the unit for Information and Publishing to see that the intentions of the policy are followed.

- - - - -