



Communication strategy for Statistics Norway 2017-2020

**Plans and
reports**

2017/6

Statistics Norway



Statistisk sentralbyrå

The strategy will be revised as the strategy period progresses, starting in 2018.

Introduction

The Communication Strategy 2017-2020 describes the overarching strategic principles and objectives of Statistics Norway's external communication up to 2020. The strategy aims to help Statistics Norway realise its vision: The stories behind the numbers, and underpin the six strategic themes:

- Connecting with the outside world
- Themes and stories
- News and user communication
- Figures on business
- Modernisation
- WCompetence for the future

With these six strategic themes, Statistics Norway will continue to strive to provide statistics and analyses that meet the needs of society.

Technological developments, increasing globalisation and a greater focus on new social phenomena put new and more challenging demands on Statistics Norway and on how we produce and disseminate our statistics.

We do not only aim to provide figures, but to explain what these numbers mean through comparisons and analyses, and we endeavour to meet the users' requirements for scope, quality and accessibility in the statistics.

The communication strategy contains

- Statistics Norway's principles of effective communication
- Statistics Norway's overarching communication objectives and focus areas
- Target groups for Statistics Norway's communication
- Communication channels



Principles of effective communication

Statistics Norway's principles of effective communication shall reinforce our credibility, and apply to all six strategic themes. They shall be adhered to, regardless of the target group, channel or client. We follow the UN's and the EU's principles for the production and dissemination of official statistics. The European Statistics Code of Practice serves as the guide for our communication and dissemination.

Transparent

Statistics Norway shall endeavour to be transparent in all aspects of its statistics, analyses and research. Findings shall be published, and errors shall be clearly indicated and corrected. The strengths and weaknesses of statistics and analyses shall be documented.

Accessible

Statistics, analyses and research published on ssb.no are public goods and should be freely available for everyone, also as open data where possible. Statistics Norway's figures shall be easy to find and use, and web accessibility guidelines shall be complied with.

The communication should be adapted to the relevant channels and formats, and comply with the legislation on the use of bokmål and nynorsk.

Statistics Norway shall help users with complex enquiries that they cannot find answers to on ssb.no. We shall be available and open to feedback from users of statistics, analyses and research, as well as those who supply data to us or participate in our surveys.

Understandable

Statistics Norway's communication shall be clear and unambiguous, and the message should be understandable. We shall use plain language, and employees shall adhere to our language profile. The main findings of statistics and analyses that are of interest to the public shall be understandable without the need for expert knowledge. We shall have good-quality metadata and definitions of terms.

Independent

Statistics Norway's credibility depends on the quality of its statistics, analyses and research, as well as adherence to the principles of equal treatment and independence. Our material shall be impartial and objective, as well as balanced, accurate and complete, regardless of the source of funding and independent of authorities, interest groups and political causes. We will not suppress findings that are controversial.

New releases of statistics and analyses shall be notified well in advance and made available to everyone at the same time.

The principles are further described on ssb.no: <http://www.ssb.no/omssb/styringsdokumenter/formidlingspolitikk>

Overarching communication objectives and focus areas

The strategic themes give a clear direction to the communication and dissemination work. Statistics Norway wants its statistics to reach more users and to be used more extensively. Strengthening the media as a channel for the dissemination of statistics to the general public is a key part of this work. Another instrument is to organise and present the content on ssb.no and other channels according to different target groups' and user groups' needs. Our social mission is to ensure that the nation has an independent, common factual basis. Our statistics, analyses and research shall be known for providing high-quality impartial information.

Statistics Norway has three overarching communication objectives:

- 1. To be visible and relevant in the public debate**
- 2. To adapt communication to the users' needs**
- 3. To ensure that Statistics Norway's social mission and role in society are public knowledge.**

Objective 1: To be visible and relevant in the public debate

Official statistics are the nation's shared factual basis and are essential for a vibrant democracy. For the past 140 years Statistics Norway has been crucial to a vibrant democracy, fact-based social planning, evaluation, debate and research. To reach more users and better meet the needs of the media, the statistics we produce shall be synthesised and presented as current news and visual illustrations.

Statistics Norway possesses a unique body of facts. We shall find new ways to combine and compile the data we have access to. We will create statistics and analyses that explain causal relationships on major themes, both nationally and internationally, and take an active role in highlighting the contexts and issues in the social debate.

Statistics Norway's professional competence shall be more visible in the media, and employees will be better equipped to explain the contexts and correlations.

Focus areas in 2017-2020:

News and user communication

News and user communication is one of six strategic themes in Statistics Norway's overarching strategy. As such, it is also a focus area that pervades the communication strategy. The aim is to expand the range of statistics, analyses and research that reaches users and to increase user numbers. The method is to use news values as a way of generating interest in the material without compromising the communication and disse-

mination principles. Throughout the strategy period, the statistics departments and the Department of communications will work together to achieve this.

In many of the issues discussed and debated in the public arena, Statistics Norway has statistics, analyses or research that can help to form a better knowledge base, thus also contributing to a more enlightened debate. We shall facilitate and adapt the content, regardless of whether we disseminate it to the media or through channels where we have direct contact with the users.

We must reuse previously published material when we know that this may be interesting in new and relevant contexts. In addition, we shall respond quickly to news items and find figures, correlations and interesting angles we can offer the media, or bring issues to light that will capture the media's attention.

Fact pages on ssb.no

We will develop fact pages on ssb.no that give a comprehensive presentation of the statistics within popular and important topics. This will give the general public easy access to figures and statistics and will serve as a tool for an enlightened social debate.

Facilitating analyses

We will write more analysis articles on ssb.no, and will explain complex issues in an understandable way. The articles shall meet the requirements for good online communication with a view to reaching as many users as possible.

Objective 2: To adapt communication to the users' needs

There is little value in statistics and analyses that are not used. The value increases when we put users' needs at the centre. This means that Statistics Norway must have a good understanding of the different needs of users and potential users in relation to statistics and analyses, and in what form and on what platforms they expect our data to be available.

The content of ssb.no will be organised and presented according to specific target groups' and users' needs, and shall be easily accessible through external search engines. The website shall be adapted for mobile devices, and shall comply with universal design requirements. Finding, understanding and using Statistics Norway's figures should be an uncomplicated process.

Statistics Norway shall communicate in a way that motivates individuals and businesses selected to participate in sample surveys, or that report to us in some other way. We shall also make it clear why their contribution is important and how to follow the response procedures.

Focus areas in 2017-2020:

User-adapted content on ssb.no

The target group or user group for content on ssb.no shall be more clearly defined. For example, the statistics pages should be redesigned to meet the needs of those searching for specific figures. A revised information architecture will be implemented to make it easier for users to navigate the website.

Modernisation of publishing solutions

We shall implement new user interfaces in Statbank and on ssb.no in order to create modern platforms that meet universal design requirements, provide greater flexibility to quickly meet new user needs and improve productivity and response times.

More user insight

We will increase our insight into user needs and behaviour through more in-depth analysis of web statistics, search logs, inquiries to the information service and use of the media, and will actively apply this to the focus areas in the communication work.

Communication with survey respondents

Statistics Norway shall gain a better insight into the challenges faced by survey respondents when answering our surveys, and improve our communication with this group. We will introduce systematic methods to quality assure our contact with the respondents, such as regular customer satisfaction surveys. First line shall deal with this as far as possible.

Objective 3.

To ensure that Statistics Norway's mission and role in society are public knowledge

Statistics Norway plays a unique role in Norwegian society. Our mission is to provide the nation with access to an independent, common factual basis, and high-quality impartial information is a public good that is accessible to everyone.

In a world with huge volumes of data, it is important that official statistics are clearly portrayed as a reliable source of high-quality information. The value of these statistics is only understood if users have sufficient knowledge of what Statistics Norway offers and stands for.

Likewise, it is important that anyone who is asked to report data for our statistical surveys is aware of how their contribution will benefit society.

In addition, it is crucial that public authorities, independent clients and other contributors who impact on the framework conditions for Statistics Norway's activities have a clear picture of our social mission.

Focus areas in 2017-2020:

More knowledge on official statistics

Through the media and ssb.no, Statistics Norway will show the comparative advantages that official statistics have from being independent and based on scientific methods and internationally established quality criteria, among other things.

Furthermore, we will convey the value of official statistics, both as a foundation for fact-based decision-making and as a tool for monitoring and evaluating policy decisions.

Social media

Social media enables Statistics Norway to reach new target groups that we cannot reach via ssb.no. These may be groups that have little knowledge about Statistics Norway. In social media, we can use a broader range of tools to disseminate the facts, such as infographics, videos and podcasts. We shall use social media to build on and strengthen our reputation as a reliable supplier of facts.

Focus on schools

Reliable statistics are an important tool for understanding the world around us and as a basis for critical thinking. We shall teach children and young people about the value of using official statistics and their value for the society. We will work with teachers, teaching unions and other contributors with a view to disseminating statistics and analyses in a way that makes them easily accessible, unambiguous and engaging. We want to reach children and young people not only to give them a good basis for making decisions in their own life, but also because they are the future decision-makers and potential suppliers of data for our statistics. Statistics that are easily accessible will also have value for a wider group than solely schoolchildren.

Target groups for Statistics Norway's communication

Every person in Norway is a potential user of Statistics Norway's statistics. However, it is important that all of our communication is targeted. Content and communication channels must be adapted to the target groups, and all published material should have one or more defined target or user groups.

The media is the most important target group in this strategy period. This is still the largest channel for disseminating Statistics Norway's statistics and analyses to the public. The media landscape is experiencing major changes, and our communication must adapt to these changes in order to remain relevant for use as media content.

School pupils are another important target group. In our world of media fragmentation and in a society that needs facts and reliable sources, school is an important arena for disseminating Statistics Norway's statistics to children and young people.

Respondents are the third prioritised target group. Statistics Norway is dependent on these for continued good quality in our statistics.

The public, public administration and the business sector are important end users of Statistics Norway's statistics, and our communication needs to be tailored to their needs.

Different types of expert users, such as Norges Bank, government ministries and directorates are important target groups and disseminators of Statistics Norway's statistics. Effective communication between our statistics departments and these groups is crucial for our activities. For other types of expert users, good access through an improved user interface in Statbank and good organisation of open data (APIs) is the most important communication tool.

Communication channels

Ssb.no, including Statbank and the associated APIs, is the main channel for disseminating Statistics Norway's statistics and analyses. Material published on ssb.no shall adhere to the guidelines and principles for good online communication, and shall as a general rule be understood and used by the public.

Content media is both a target group and a channel. These are described under target groups.

Social media is used to reach target groups we are unable to reach via ssb.no. Visual tools, carefully selected content, timeliness and targeted messages will help ensure that statistics and research are accessible to everyone. We will use a more concise, easier to understand, and occasionally humorous form than on ssb.no.

Employees in Statistics Norway are instrumental to our communication work. Statistics Norway's employees have extensive contact with different parts of society, government ministries and directorates, and as participants in collaboration forums with other agencies, speakers, experts in the media, and in many other ways. This direct contact is vital for building our credibility and reputation.

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