

Description of the Finnish Statistical System

General Information

Mission of the NSI. The Statistics Finland Act assigns Statistics Finland (SF) with the function of compiling statistics and reports describing the conditions in society and providing for the general development of official statistics in collaboration with other central government authorities. To realise these functions, SF collects and maintains data files on the society, develops statistical methodology and conducts research benefiting the development of statistics as well as provides information service and promotes the use of statistics. SF also co-ordinates international statistical co-operation in Finland.

Status of the NSI in public administration system of the country. SF was established in 1865 and it is the single central government organisation founded for the purpose of compiling statistics. Its tasks are prescribed in the Act and Decree on Statistics Finland. Administratively SF is operating under the Ministry of Finance, and its annual budget is decided on by the parliament. Independence and autonomy from political decision-making are, however, prerequisites when deciding what statistics to compile and selecting the procedures followed in making them.

According to the Decree on Statistics Finland, the agency is managed by the Director General, who is responsible for appropriate organisation, development and reporting of the activities and finances, and especially for the attainment of the set targets. The Director General decides on the outlines of the general operating policy, as well as on the Rules of Procedure and the appointment of Directors and other officials.

Procedure of Appointment of Director-General of the NSI. The Director General of SF is appointed by the Council of State on the basis of an open application procedure. According to the general principles of Central Government, the grounds for appointment are stated in an appointment memo, which is a public document.

Location of seat of the NSI, regional offices. SF is located in one establishment in Helsinki. In addition, it has regional service offices in Turku, Tampere, Seinäjoki and Oulu. For the purpose of conducting interview surveys, SF has a country wide interviewer organisation as well as border interviewers at border crossing points.

Organisational structure of the NSI. SF has ten Departments: the Secretariat of the Director General, six Departments producing statistics and three Departments producing support functions. Project work across organisational boundaries is widespread. The Rules of Procedure define the internal organisation, the responsibilities of managers and supervisors, responsibilities for processes and the fields of activity of the various Departments.

Main legal acts. The activities of SF are guided by the Act and Decree on Statistics Finland, the Statistics Act and the legal acts of the EU in the field of statistics. Other legislation, e.g. the Act on State Officials, the Act on the Criteria for Charges Payable to the State as well as the State Budget and the performance agreement made with the Ministry of Finance, must also be taken into account.

Statistical programme. SF produces the vast majority of Official Statistics of Finland (OSF). SF produces a good 200 different statistics from 26 different topics e.g. population,

living conditions, the national economy, the public sector, enterprises and the environment. SF's annual program is published on the Internet and consists of the performance agreement, a description of main development projects and calendars of data collections and releases of statistics. The development of the program is based on long-term co-operation and communication with users of statistics as well as international requirements.

System of Official Statistics in the Country

SF serves as the general authority in the field of statistics and co-ordinates the production of the Official Statistics of Finland (OSF) and the entire National Statistical Service. In addition to SF, there are three other named statistics producing authorities which are, by virtue of law, entitled to collect data for the purpose of compiling official statistics. These authorities are the National Board of Customs, the Information Centre of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health. Furthermore, there are 13 other authorities producing statistics, which compile statistics on their field of activity from data they have initially collected for another purpose.

Clear procedures have been set up to realise the co-operation and co-ordination of the Statistical Service. These procedures are implemented e.g. via the contact person network and the Advisory Board of Official Statistics of Finland. On the basis of broad preparatory work SF compiles a document on the main lines of the development of the National Statistical Service in Finland.

Advisory Board for Statistics Finland

SF has an advisory board supporting its strategic management. Its appointment and tasks are defined in a decree. The Advisory Board consists of the Director General, a representative of staff as well as six members representing SF's external stakeholders. The Ministry of Finance appoints the Advisory Board.

SF has also established various advisory boards and working groups comprising representatives of stakeholders, e.g. the advisory board of the Library of Statistics, the scientific advisory board and the liaison group between SF and the representatives the business community.

Publication activities

SF operates according to the publication guidelines it has defined. New statistics are comprehensively released on the Internet and available free of charge. Nearly 700 releases of statistical data are made each year according to a publication calendar published in advance. Chargeable products (e.g. printed publications) and services (e.g. tailored online services) are produced for customers' specific information needs.

Other relevant remarks (e.g. major policies)

SF has defined e.g. the principles of statistical ethics, a management policy, a competence strategy and personnel programme, data protection principles, customer service principles, a communication strategy, outlines for international activities and outlines for research. SF has also published guidelines for quality in statistics.

For further information about SF, please consult: www.stat.fi.