

Statistics Netherlands



Statistics Netherlands



To the reader,

I am pleased to present this corporate brochure of Statistics Netherlands. I hope it will provide interested readers with an insight into the organisation and activities of Statistics Netherlands.

Statistical production methods and practices at Statistics Netherlands are regularly reviewed and redesigned. The reform of the statistical production process which started in 2001 and the increasing use of administrative sources instead of traditional surveys have led to major changes for our organisation.

We are developing new ways of getting our information to our users. StatLine, our online database, is valued very highly by its users and has received a great amount of attention from our international colleagues. With new visuals on the websites such as the Business Cycle Tracer, we are trying to make the sometimes complex statistical information more accessible for the public. We are continually aiming to improve our statistical output and to cover new areas. This brochure describes our activities in areas like public health and population ageing.

A picture of our statistical work would not be complete without sketching the international context: Statistics Netherlands is active in a number of international research and development projects.

The brochure touches on these and many more activities. I hope it will provide useful information - and perhaps inspiration - to our colleagues and visitors.

Director-General of Statistics Netherlands,
Gosse van der Veen



About Statistics Netherlands

Statistics Netherlands was founded in 1899 to collect information, process it and publish (official) national statistics. This is still our core task. Our mission is to compile and publish undisputed and consistent up-to-date statistical information that is relevant in practice, and for policy and research purposes. In addition, Statistics Netherlands is responsible for producing statistics required by the European Union. The legal basis for its work is the Act of 20 November 2003.

Statistics Netherlands is directly supervised by a high level independent Central Commission for Statistics. This Commission authorises the statistical programme and oversees the administration. Politically, Statistics Netherlands is accountable to the Minister of Economic Affairs, who is responsible for the relevant legislation and the budget. By and large, this *trias statistica* has existed in various legal constructions since the foundation of Statistics Netherlands in 1899. On 3 January 2004, Statistics Netherlands became an autonomous agency with legal personality.

Statistics Netherlands has a longstanding international orientation: it has been host to the International Statistical Institute (ISI) since 1917, was one of the active founders of the United Nations Statistical Commission, and has a strong commitment towards the European Statistical System.

Key figures (2006)

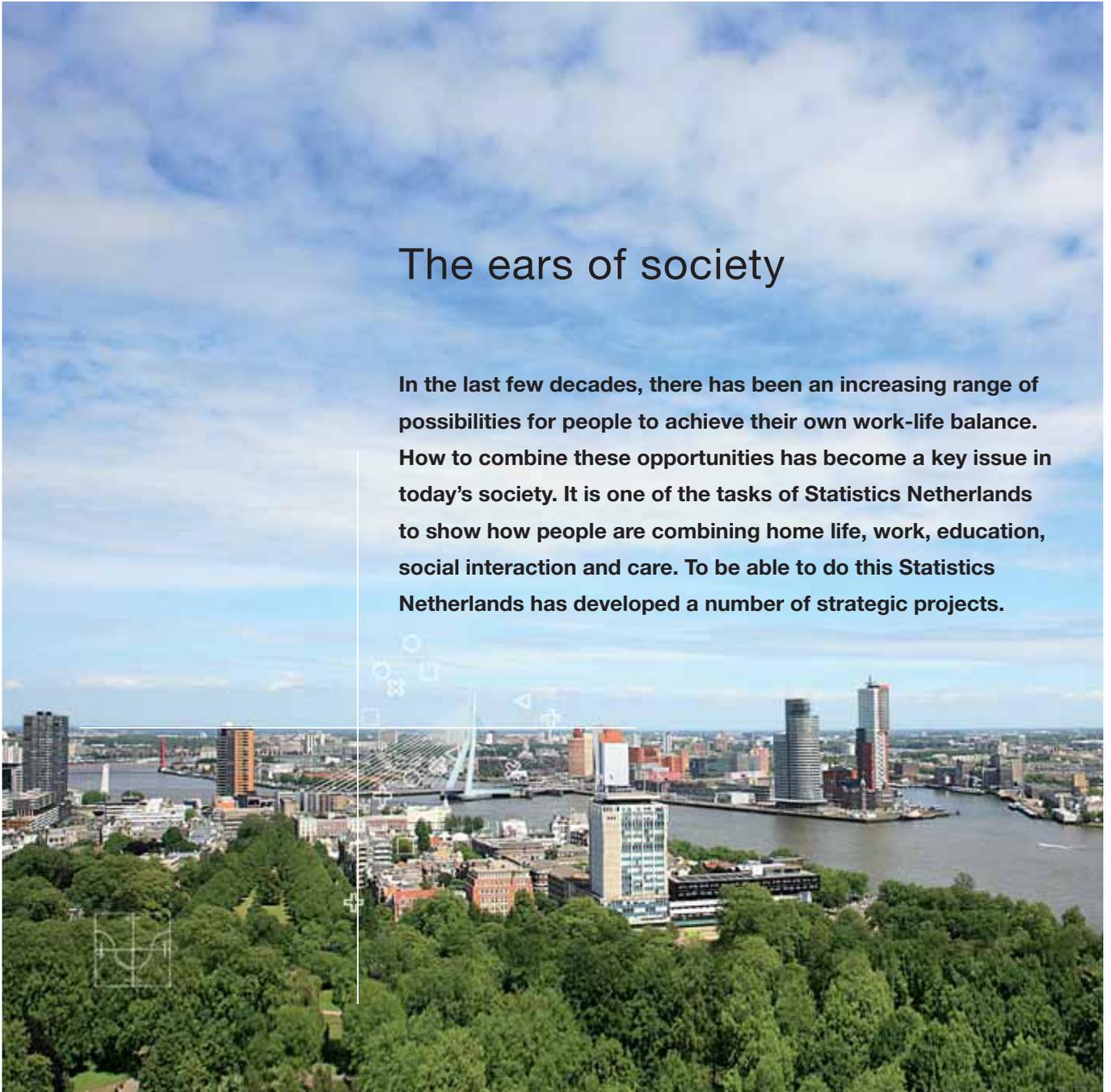
Staff and budget

- Statistics Netherlands had a staff of 2,694 in 2006 (2,315 full-time equivalents). 50.3 percent of the staff work in Voorburg, 49.7 percent in Heerlen.
- The ratio of men to women is 63:37.
- The ratio of full-time to part-time is 66:34.
- 55 percent of the staff have a degree in higher education. The average level of education is set to rise further in the future, as many young university graduates are being recruited.
- The annual budget is € 167 million (2005); 95 percent of this is financed by central government, 5 percent is income from commissioned work.
- In the first six months of 2006, Statistics Netherlands published 69 press releases; 59 percent were quoted in the six national newspapers.
- On 1 November 2006, StatLine, the electronic database of Statistics Netherlands, contained 1,677 tables with a total size of 7.9 gigabytes. In the first ten months of this year, 6.7 million tables were accessed.



The ears of society

In the last few decades, there has been an increasing range of possibilities for people to achieve their own work-life balance. How to combine these opportunities has become a key issue in today's society. It is one of the tasks of Statistics Netherlands to show how people are combining home life, work, education, social interaction and care. To be able to do this Statistics Netherlands has developed a number of strategic projects.

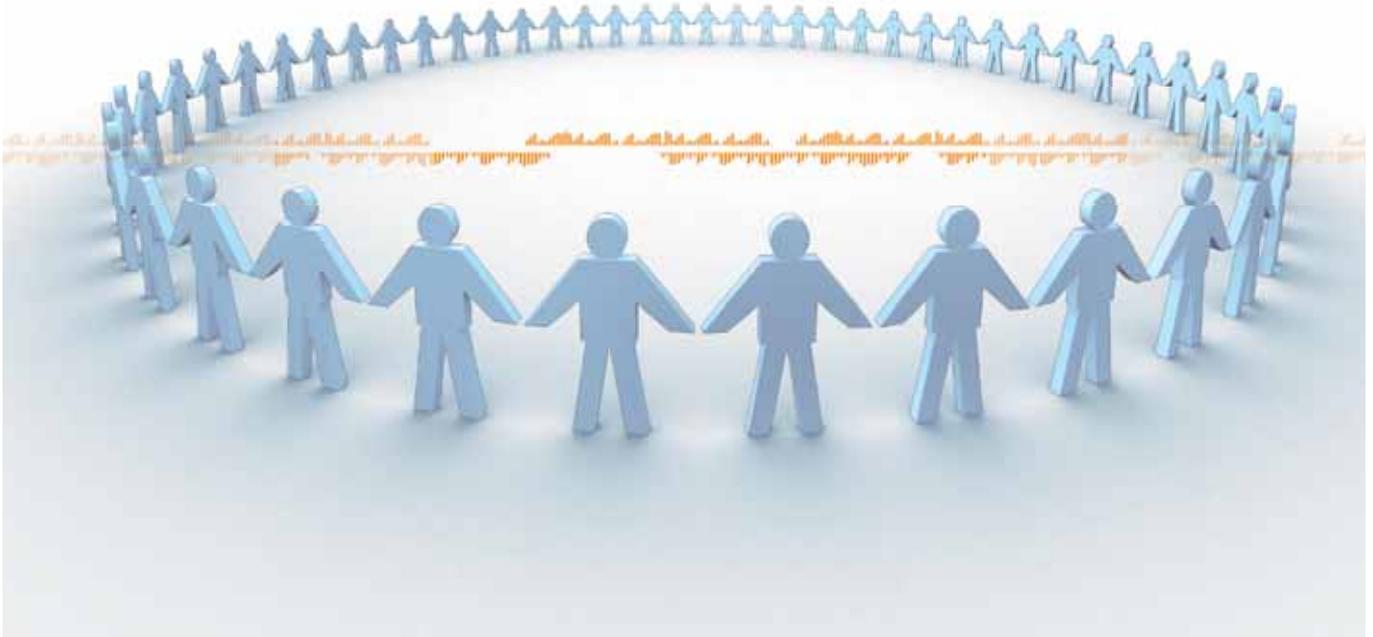


Social dynamics

The focus of the project *Social dynamics and extended labour accounts* is on providing statistical information on the life course of the population. The project charts changes in people's labour market position by following their careers. Labour market flow data are linked to data on the demographic life course, educational careers and changes in income.

The aim is to construct a data infrastructure with administrative data on demographic characteristics, jobs, wages, social security benefits and other income

data. Longitudinal data from the *Labour Force Survey and Statistics on Income and Living Conditions* (EU-SILC) will also be incorporated. With the aid of these data, it is possible to analyse moves between participation in education, labour market and the social security system; but the data can also help give an insight into the socio-economic integration of immigrants, the work-life balance, duration of unemployment and numbers of social security benefits.



Health and care statistics

Statistics Netherlands has a longstanding tradition in the field of statistics on health and care. It was one of the first institutions to introduce a system of health accounts in its national statistics, making it possible to provide a complete and consistent picture of spending on health care. The statistics were based on surveys held among care institutions and professionals in the sector.

For the present *Health Statistics Database*, existing medical registrations have been used to compile statistics on health and care consumption. By linking these data with other socio-economic data, a database has been created which can be used for cross-sectional and longitudinal analysis.

On the basis of the *Health Statistics Database*, Statistics Netherlands compiles statistics on hospital care, first hospital admissions per diagnosis and mortality following first admission, if required broken down by socio-economic status. In the next few years

Statistics Netherlands will compile similar statistics on perinatal care, primary health care, mental health care and care for the elderly.

In addition, the data can also be linked to the integrally available registrations of sickness absence and work incapacity. Similarly, for all health care institutions in the country information on the financial-economic aspects of health care can be obtained via data from the Tax and Customs Administration and the Institute for Employment Benefit Schemes (UWV), and on the basis of the care delivered by the institutions.

Integrated information on population ageing

The project *Integrated information on population ageing* aims to provide a complete and consistent picture of the various aspects of population ageing in the Netherlands. The primary goal of the project is to develop new statistics on personal pension entitlements. These statistics will ultimately be incorporated as a pension module in the National Accounts. This will make it possible to describe income and wealth positions of persons and households now and in the future. In addition new information will be developed about the socio-economic aspects of ageing, such as the number of people making use of early retirement schemes and the process of retirement itself, but also medical consumption, housing and mobility.



The primary goal is to develop new statistics on personal pension entitlements

Statistics for everyone

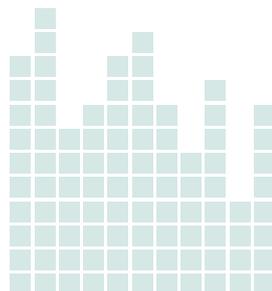
All of Statistics Netherlands' statistics are available on or via the website. Everyone can access the output database StatLine, press releases, and the Web Magazine. Technical support and European Statistical Data Support is also available via the website. Users who need help to find what they need can call or e-mail our Information Service, and researchers with special requests can contact the Centre for Policy Statistics.



Website and StatLine

All publishable data of Statistics Netherlands are accessible via the website. The website and *StatLine* can be accessed independently on the Internet (<http://www.cbs.nl> and <http://statline.cbs.nl> respectively).

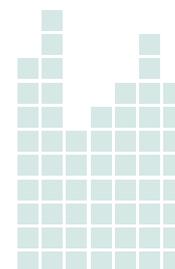
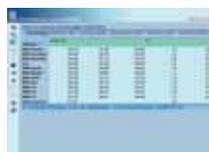
New information is published simultaneously on the website and in *StatLine*. Press releases are published at 9.30 a.m., the underlying figures can be accessed in *StatLine* also at 9.30 a.m. The website contains ready-made links to the most recent data. Users can also make personalised links so that they always have the latest data at their fingertips.



Web Magazine

The *Web Magazine* has been published since the summer of 1998 (and in English since 2002). It is published weekly in a fixed format. Each *Web Magazine* consists of four or five short articles comprising a few paragraphs of text and two or three graphs based on the most recent figures. Where possible the editors try to tie in the topics with issues in the news.

The *Web Magazine* certainly seems to be fulfilling a demand, with more than 62 thousand hits (Dutch version) per month. Coverage of the items is also wide in the press. In 2005 the average number of newspaper articles based on the information in the *Web Magazine* – the citation rate – was 2.22.



Information Service

The Information Service – or *Infoservice* – helps users find their way through the statistics, shows them how to find the correct and the most recent figures they need, and provides customer support for the website. In addition, the *Infoservice* is the point of contact between customers and statistical specialists.

Since October 2004 the *Infoservice* is also responsible for the provision of information from Eurostat (*European Statistical Data Support: ESDS*). The *Infoservice* uses an automatic call distributor to answer requests by telephone. Most on-line requests are received via a *webform* sent to the e-mail management system.

Microdata analysis

Under certain - very strict - conditions, the *Centre for Policy Statistics* makes available microdata for analysis by external researchers. A large number of datasets can be used for such analyses.

For academic institutes, secure microdata-sets are made available on cd-rom via the *Data Archiving Networked Services (DANS)*. In addition, researchers from institutes authorised by the CCS can work on-site at Statistics Netherlands to do analysis on microdata-sets that are made accessible for this purpose on a separate network. A special room has been equipped for this on-site research.

Remote execution and *remote access* are alternative

options, enabling researchers to work on datasets outside statistics Netherlands. In the case of remote execution, researchers send scripts or set-ups to Statistics Netherlands, so that they can be applied to the data on-site.

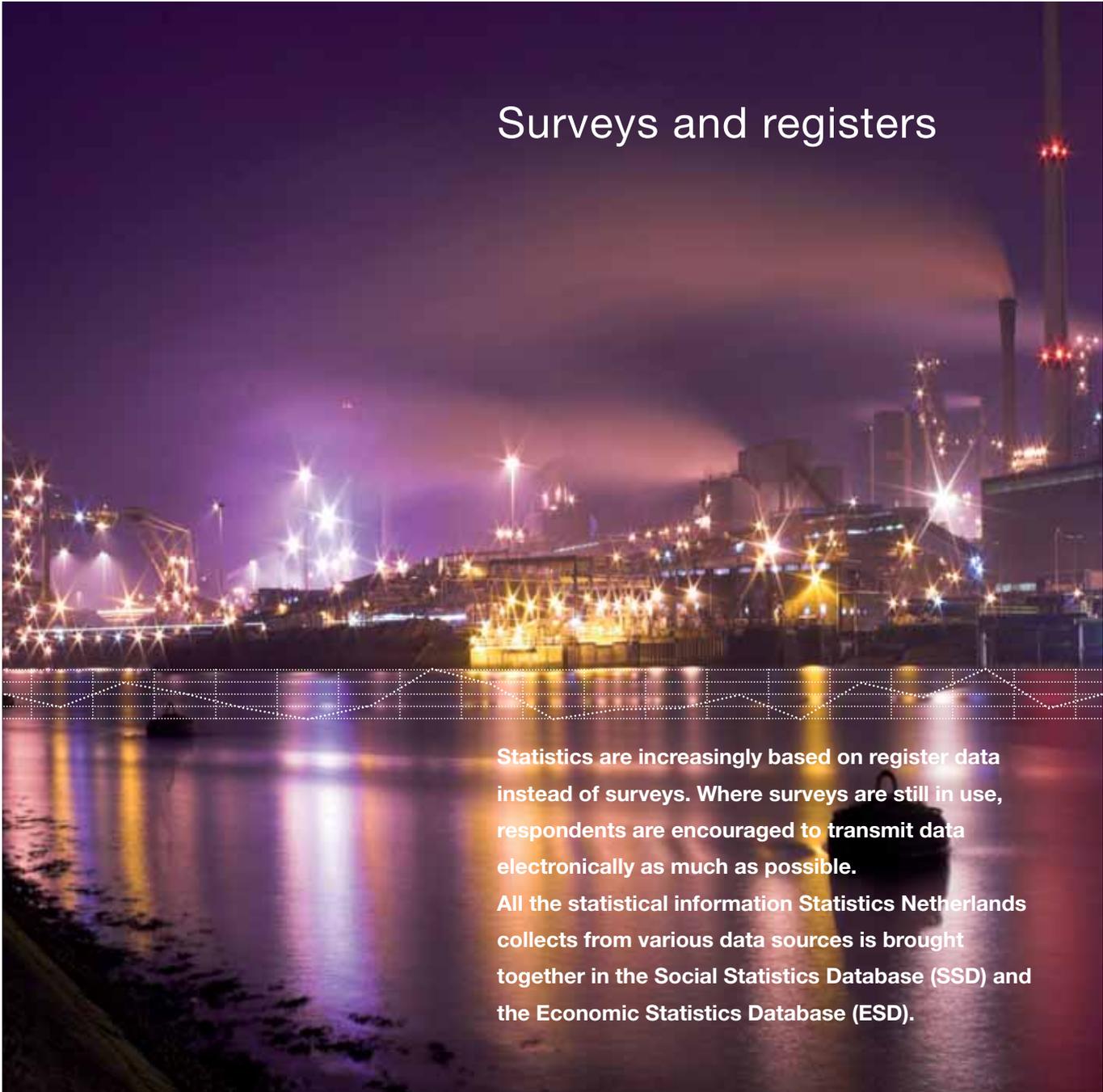
Remote access is a new form of data access.

In this case, Statistics Netherlands installs a provision at the researcher's place of work so that he can carry out analyses from there. The data do not leave Statistics Netherlands' servers and cannot be downloaded. Researchers can only carry out scripts and set-ups and can view the results of these on screen. Remote access is now in a pilot stage and will probably become available in the course of 2006.

At the end of November 2005 Statistics Netherlands launched the Business Cycle Tracer on its website. This is a tool to determine the state and course of the Dutch economy on the basis of developments in the 15 main economic indicators.

Centre for Policy Statistics

The *Centre for Policy Statistics* was set up in 2001 in response to the growing demand for statistical information from ministries, planning agencies and the Dutch parliament. The Centre advises on the possibilities for research and on the data which are or can be made available for these studies. It also carries out analyses on request and compiles statistical overviews with the aid of Statistics Netherlands data.



Surveys and registers

Statistics are increasingly based on register data instead of surveys. Where surveys are still in use, respondents are encouraged to transmit data electronically as much as possible.

All the statistical information Statistics Netherlands collects from various data sources is brought together in the Social Statistics Database (SSD) and the Economic Statistics Database (ESD).

SSD and ESD

The Social Statistics Database (SSD) is primarily based on register information and data from business and household surveys which is not available in registers. The registers often contain complete information on all relevant units. In the Netherlands, this is certainly the case for demographic data, income tax data, labour market participation, dependence on social security benefits, participation in education and housing facilities.

The datasets of the Population Register are the backbone of the database, as all the other datasets are linked to this register. Linking on a personal identification number has proven to be successful: approximately 99 percent of the records are linked. If such an identification number is absent, the sources are linked on postal code, house number, date of birth and sex. This results in approximately 97 percent of linked records. The linked datasets form the basis for the work process of the SSD.

To collect survey data as efficiently as possible, the combined register data are increasingly used as a sample frame for household surveys. The data are pre-stratified for this purpose. In order to improve the linking procedure, personal identification numbers have recently been included in the samples taken from the Population Register. The success of the linking procedure is then almost 100 percent.

A key element in optimising the use of administrative sources is also the mutual integration of individual primary and secondary datasets.

Blaise

Many household surveys are carried out using either computer assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) or computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI). Moreover, the explosive growth of the Internet is opening new interesting possibilities for computer assisted web interviewing (CAWI).

Statistics Netherlands was one of the forerunners in the use of computers in the interview process. To do this as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible, we developed the Blaise System in the 1980s. This system for computer assisted survey processing has now more or less become a de facto standard for computer assisted data collection at NSIs around the world. Today, all major statistical agencies in Europe, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand use the package for survey data collection.

The Economic Statistics Database (ESD) consists of a large number of related registrations with business-economic data from various sources, linked and integrated data at meso and micro level, supported by clearly defined metadata.

A key element in optimising the use of administrative sources is also the mutual integration of individual primary and secondary datasets. This process of integration also strongly facilitates the output side: it can accommodate the changing needs of customers better, and respond better and more quickly to all kinds of new issues, such as globalisation, productivity, ageing population etc. This unique project – the integration of individual sets of (micro)data to one interrelated and consistent knowledge database or interrelated theme-oriented databases - provides the competitive advantage to add new value to the output.

Pressures and challenges

The shift to register-based statistics mean using data available in existing registers where possible. Sample surveys will only be conducted when such data are not available in existing registers, and will make use of computer-assisted interviewing, including Internet surveys.

Using register data is not without methodological challenges. The data are collected by different agencies for different purposes at different times and using different definitions. Although sampling errors are substantially reduced by use of registers, this is not the case for non-sampling errors. Substantial errors may still



CBS-IRIS

Another software programme developed by Statistics Netherlands is CBS-IRIS, a system to collect data for international trade statistics. The data can either be entered manually or imported from a dataset already contained in the computer administration. Users can define default screens - in which a (common) standard value is designated – to minimise manual entry. The data undergo plausibility checks as they are entered.

In 2005, 96 percent of the companies required to submit information did so electronically, in the last quarter of 2005 this rate had even risen to 98 percent. The data are coded before they are transmitted. At Statistics Netherlands the further processing of these coded data is completely computerised.

be caused by phenomena like item non-response, measurement errors, and lack of population coverage. Given the fact the register data are not of perfect quality, Statistics Netherlands must monitor and improve this quality. Many registers currently in use need to be edited and imputed before they can be used for statistics.

For the time being surveys will remain an important source of information. The challenges in this respect are to reduce the response burden further, to minimise data collection costs and to minimise both the size and the effects of non-response.



The idea is that by creating a robust and flexible application landscape, operational ICT costs will be reduced.

Process redesign

Statistics Netherlands has started an ambitious programme aimed at standardising and streamlining statistical processes. The programme seeks to speed up the bureau's flexible response to the changing needs for information, while improving the quality of the statistical information.

The idea is that by creating a robust and flexible application landscape, operational ICT costs will be reduced. The programme started off with the development of office-wide architectures for information, application and technical aspects.

The information architecture allows descriptions of all data exchanged inside and outside the organisation. The application architecture records the applications and their mutual relationship, and the technical architecture describes the hardware, network connections and development tools.

The architectures revolve around a data service centre and meta information about the stored statistical data. These two elements allow the use and re-use of data within several statistical processes and improve the coherence and consistency of the information.

Besides this, Statistics Netherlands has started the development of two other so-called generic services in the domain of data collection and rule-based processing.

Another part of the programme focuses on the redesign of the production chain for economic statistics, i.e. the chain short-term statistics, business statistics and National Accounts. These actions aim to improve the quality and especially the timeliness of statistical output, and to make the statistical process more efficient by maximising the use and re-use of statistical data. This would also facilitate a further reduction of the administrative burden.

E-data reporting

One dilemma facing Statistics Netherlands today is that it needs to produce and publish more, more detailed and more consistent information on individuals and businesses, while at the same time it is committed to safeguarding the privacy of these individual persons and businesses. Disclosure control research is aimed at developing better techniques for assessing disclosure risk and diminishing this risk with minimal information loss.

A growing user demand for easy and broad accessibility of microdata increases this dilemma. Studies are currently underway to explore the possibilities and constraints of remote execution and remote access to microdata.

The growth in both the amount and the richness of statistical information makes it more difficult for users of the on-line statistics database StatLine to find what they are looking for. Innovative and creative research on intuitive search algorithms and information visualisation techniques is needed to further enhance the user value of StatLine.

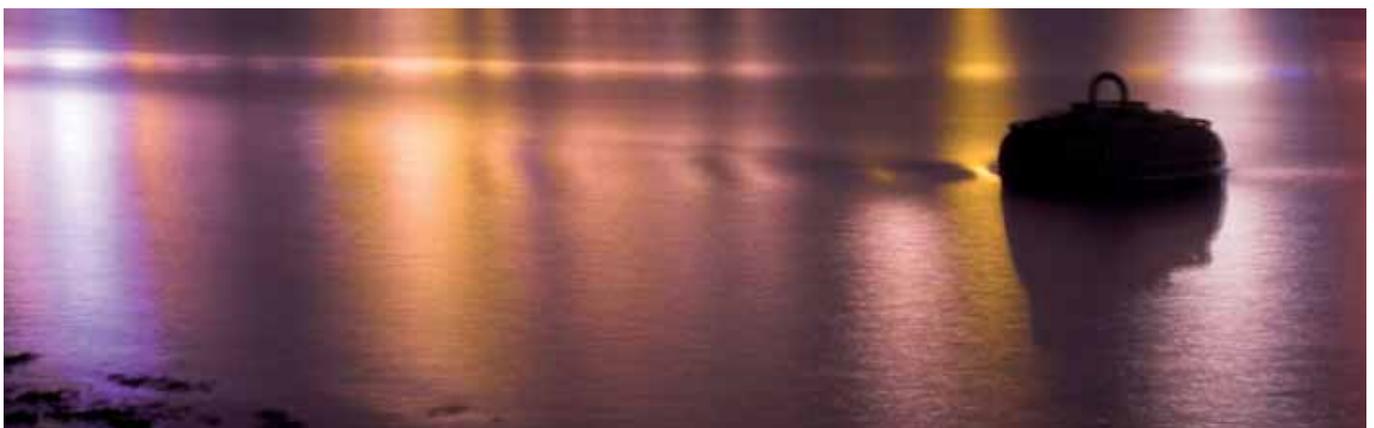
Response burden

Statistics Netherlands surveys still require companies and institutions to put in a lot of time - and money.

As described above, the use of administrative sources means we can reduce their involvement in surveys.

Since Statistics Netherlands has become an autonomous agency, it is indeed bound to use administrative sources where possible. As an autonomous agency the bureau also has access to all government-funded registrations.

Statistics Netherlands has taken action on a wide front in recent years to reduce the response burden for businesses. The use of administrative sources, condensed questionnaires and higher survey thresholds has resulted in fewer companies having to be included in the survey; and for those that are, less work is involved. This repaid itself almost immediately: in 1994 the costs for respondents amounted to around 60 million euro. In 2002 this had already dropped to 23.5 million euro, and in 2005 it was 18 million euro.



Beyond our borders

International comparability is a must for statistics. Global comparability for data such as population composition, economic structure and international migration is high on the agenda. European policy initiatives, such as the Lisbon strategy aimed to improve economic growth and employment in Europe, demand more and better statistics. This requires international consultation at all levels. Statistics Netherlands is active in many international forums, such as the United Nations, the OECD and especially the European Union (EU).



It is the ambition of Statistics Netherlands to play an active and progressive role in the development of harmonised and high quality European statistics. We are well known for our initiatives to improve the statistical information for the EU, as well as for the institutional setting of the European Statistical System (ESS).

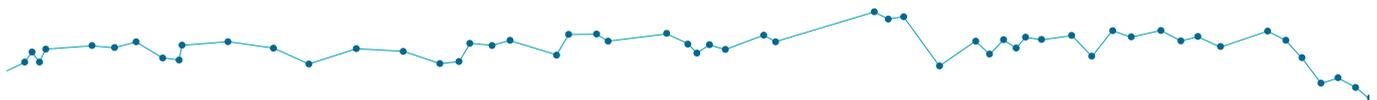
Statistical requirements on behalf of the EU are laid down in binding regulations. These regulations cover more than 60 percent of our work programme. Meeting this increasing international demand for statistics requires a huge effort. The bureau will continue to give statistics resulting from European obligations priority in its work programme.

Strategic participation

As a knowledge institute, Statistics Netherlands is an authority in its field and has the ambition to take part actively in and influence European and international meetings at all levels. In addition to strategic participation in the Statistical Programming Committee and the U.N. Statistical Commission,



it also actively cooperates in the development of methods and techniques in many policy areas. It does this by participating in committees, technical working groups and task forces, in decision-making on European legislation the Council working group, and of course in the *Centres and Networks of Excellence* (Genex).



European Training Programme for Statistics

Statistics Netherlands is also well known for its high quality courses in the framework of the European Training Programme for Statistics.

Its courses on National Accounts and statistical disclosure control are renowned and have been internationally well attended for a number of years.

Cenex

In these *Centres and Networks of excellence (Cenex)* the expertise and strengths of a number of countries are combined in accordance with a conceptual model, under the leadership of one country. The first Cenex, on the theme statistical confidentiality, started in 2005, the second, on (hedonic) price observation, in 2006.

Statistics Netherlands is the leader of the Cenex consortium on statistical confidentiality. Further participants are the national statistical institutes of Germany, Italy Great Britain, Slovenia, Estonia, Sweden and Austria. The University of Tarragona (Spain) is involved as a sub-contactor. For the second Cenex, Germany will be the consortium leader. Statistics Netherlands will also participate in this Cenex.

Technical support

Since 2005 Statistics Netherlands has been providing technical assistance for three colleague institutes abroad. We are helping Lithuania and candidate EU member Turkey to meet the European directives and requirements laid down in the *acquis communautaire*. The bureau is also providing aid to the Central Bureau of Statistics in Suriname.

Statistics Netherlands is also an active participant in the SODI project. SODI (*SDMX Open Database Interchange*) is a data sharing project in the European Statistical System, in which Eurostat can use Statistics Netherlands information - via StatLine - quickly and efficiently to compile and publish European Statistics.



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