

Subject Area Design Labour Market

Final report



Subject Area Design Labour Market, Final report

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Foreword

In late 2019, Statistics Sweden adopted a new strategy for developing operations over the coming years. This strategy contains several sub-goals, as well as four endeavours. One of these endeavours focuses on modernising and future-proofing the labour market statistics. The development initiative Subject Area Design Labour Market constitutes an essential part of this endeavour. The present report is the final report on Subject Area Design Labour Market.

At an early stage, other statistical agencies involved in this subject area – the Swedish Work Environment Authority, the Swedish National Mediation Office, and the Swedish Public Employment Service – were linked to the work. Toward the end of 2019, a steering group was established that included members from all four government agencies. Operative work on the subject area design has been managed by a working group, the Subject Area Design desk, to which a number of committees have been linked. In practice, numerous people have been involved in the work that resulted in the plan for future labour market statistics presented in this final report.

This plan highlights several steps that need to be taken to achieve modernised and future-proofed labour market statistics. It is based on the overall picture of all the investigation activities carried out within the subject area design work during the period from late 2019 up to early 2021. The final report includes four main appendices and a large number of sub-appendices. Taken together, they provide the background to the plan presented in this report.

Work on Subject Area Design Labour Market was performed using an iterative process, and Statistics Sweden's objective has been to engage users of statistics to a great extent. However, as a statistical agency, it ultimately falls on Statistics Sweden to evaluate and prioritise user needs, and consider them in relation to constraints such as respondent burden and costs, in order to subsequently determine which statistics should be produced. The plan presented in this report is a means for Statistics Sweden to shoulder the task systematically and cohesively for an entire subject area.

Statistics Sweden, May 2021

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Summary

Statistics Sweden has prepared a three-stage plan to establish modernised and future-proofed labour market statistics. From the final stage in 2025, Statistics Sweden will be responsible for two statistical areas under the subject area Labour Market – *Labour supply* and *Labour demand*. Each statistical area will contain one statistical product. The breakdown and content of these products will be based on information needs rather than the underlying survey or data source. *Statistics users' information needs* is key, but as an agency responsible for official statistics, Statistics Sweden is responsible for evaluating and prioritising these needs and for specifying the *purpose of the statistics*. Costs and the respondent burden will also be considerations when drawing up and specifying the purpose and quality requirements.

In the short term, 2021–2022, a new, mainly register-based statistical product will be introduced in the labour market area – Population by Labour Market Status (BAS). This product will constitute the basis for monthly register-based statistics on labour supply. As part of the content, it will include the statistics that are currently presented in the context of three existing statistical products. However, BAS will have more content, and thereby address more needs, possibly also for users who currently use the Labour Force Survey (LFS) as their main source of information concerning developments in the labour market. The aim is that BAS will evolve from a supplement to statistics based on directly collected data, to a replacement for parts of such statistics. In addition, Statistics Sweden will continue to develop the sampling design and estimation procedure in the LFS to improve accuracy.

In the medium term, 2023–2024, focus will be on harnessing the opportunities provided by PAYE tax returns per employee (AGI) in the statistical area *Labour demand*. This means that an even larger part of labour market statistics will be register-based, and that the volume of data collected directly from respondents, through sample surveys, will decrease. The products will be adapted also at this stage, resulting in fewer products. A total of six products, two of which are currently not classified as official statistics, will be replaced by two new products. One of these will make use of the opportunities provided by the AGI, while the other will provide a comprehensive approach on information needs concerning employers' demands for labour. One could say that the two new products reflect met and unfulfilled demand for labour, respectively. In addition, further work will include adapting the sampling design and estimation procedure in the LFS, with the objective of meeting set quality requirements at the lowest possible cost.

In the long term, as of 2025, the labour market statistics for which Statistics Sweden is responsible will consist of two products, one per

statistical area. Both products are hybrids; that is, some statistics will be based on register data, while others will be based on data collected directly from respondents, through sample surveys. For broader, more comprehensive, products, the boundary between register-based and sample-based statistics becomes less relevant. This is a clear shift from today's statistics, which are mainly *sample-based with register-based elements*, to statistics that can be described as *register-based with sample-based elements*. Conditions have improved for coherence and co-analysis of various elements of the statistics, and value added can be created for users, for example in the form of additional content or improved descriptions of the statistics.

The plan involves a shift from the current situation, in which a product is often based on *one* collection activity or data source, to a future situation with fewer – but more comprehensive in terms of content – products based on the information needs to be met. Regular dialogue with users has been an important dimension of our work and the objective is to work iteratively with users also during the implementation of the plan. Future labour market statistics will be based on register data to a much larger extent than today. In line with a growing proportion of statistics becoming register-based, at the same time changes are being introduced that aim to reduce the need for data acquired through direct collection. The respondent burden will be reduced considerably, as well as costs for direct collection, not least for the LFS.

The objective is that the statistics, given the circumstances, will be fully developed at any given time in terms of use of existing register data. Implementing the plan will lead to changes in opportunities as well as risks. For both Statistics Sweden and users of the statistics, parts of this transition may be extensive and challenging. However, Statistics Sweden deems the shift to be necessary – in part to tackle the task of reducing the respondent burden, in part due to the challenge concerning non-response in the LFS, with implications for both the quality of the statistics and the cost of production. As a statistical agency, Statistics Sweden is obliged to evaluate and prioritise user needs, in order to determine which statistics to produce, given existing resources and constraints. The presented plan for future labour market statistics can thus be seen as a means for Statistics Sweden to systematically and cohesively take its responsibility for the subject area Labour Market.

Introduction

The Official Statistics Act (SFS 2001:99) and the Official Statistics Ordinance (SFS 2001:100) provide the legal framework for the official statistics of Sweden. Under the Ordinance, three government agencies are to be responsible for official statistics in a total of eight statistical areas within the subject area Labour Market. These statistical areas are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Official statistics in the subject area Labour Market

Statistical agency	Statistical area
Swedish Work Environment Authority	Work environment Work-related injuries and ill health
National Mediation Office	Wages, salaries and labour costs
Statistics Sweden	Labour Force Survey Aggregate gross wages Sick pay Employment, gainful employment and working hours Vacancies and unemployment

In addition to official labour market statistics, other government statistics within the labour market area, not least the Swedish Public Employment Service's operational statistics, are also of great use.

Labour market statistics form an essential foundation for analysis, study, research, and political decisions, at both the national and international level. In the latter context, the European Union is an important user and actor, and certain parts of the labour market statistics are governed by European regulations with the purpose of making statistics comparable between countries.

Demands on the statistics, like the conditions for their production, have changed over time. While information needs tend to expand, both in terms of content and timeliness, the conditions to study developments in the labour market using sample surveys have deteriorated.¹ The world around us is changing and individuals' willingness to participate in surveys has diminished significantly. One example is the Labour Force Surveys (LFS), in which the response rate has dropped by about 30 percentage points since 2010. This rise in non-response leads to less accurate estimates and higher data collection costs. Therefore, it necessary to develop new methods as well as find other data sources

¹See, for example, Luiten, Hox and de Leeuw (2020).

that can replace, or at least reduce, the need for such data that are currently being collected directly.

In addition, each statistical agency is obliged to take the response burden into account when data are collected for official statistics, and statistical agencies are to, as far as possible, use data from existing registers in the production of official statistics. The conditions for doing so have improved recently through access to new administrative data, not the least the PAYE tax returns per employee (AGI). This data source holds great potential for reducing direct data collection and creating improved conditions for coherence in the labour market statistics.

Against this background, Statistics Sweden has decided that *A design for completely modernised labour market statistics* will form one of four endeavours in the period between 2020 and 2022. As part of the endeavour, a development initiative labelled Subject Area Design Labour Market has been conducted. The work has aimed to analyse and identify current use and needs of labour market statistics, and using this as a starting point, to provide a broad analysis of the status of these statistics. The task has also included proposing new statistics that describe the Swedish labour market. These efforts have been conducted in dialogue with central users and have been carried out in cooperation with Swedish Public Employment Service, the Swedish Work Environment Authority, and the National Mediation Office. A more detailed description of the task and the background for Subject Area Design Labour Market is available in *Ämnesdesign Arbetsmarknad, huvudbilaga 1: Uppdrag och genomförande* (Statistics Sweden, 2021d).

The present report is the final report for Subject Area Design Labour Market. It begins with a description of the overall direction of the future labour market statistics as seen by Statistics Sweden. This is followed by the plan for modernising and future-proofing Statistics Sweden's part of the official labour market statistics. The plan describes what Statistics Sweden wishes to achieve with its statistical responsibility in the labour market area, in the short, medium and long term. The report also includes a general impact assessment of the plan. Although resources have not yet been allocated to the plan, it is evident that a lot of work, of varying nature, remains to be done for its implementation.

Future labour market statistics – important aspects

Labour market statistics are essential for following and evaluating both the state and progression of the labour market and the economy. The statistics are based on various sources, consist of several different products², are to a large extent regulated by the EU and are produced by various government agencies. It is essential that a reform of the statistics is done in a way that ensures a consistently sufficient basis for decisions, which may require parallel reporting for a period. Any planned changes therefore need to be introduced gradually, rather than altogether at one time. Furthermore, the level of complexity in reforming various elements of the statistics varies, for example depending on access to alternative data sources for the production of statistics.

The plan for future labour market statistics presented by Statistics Sweden forms part of the agency's stated ambition to meet user needs and *at the same time* reduce its dependence on direct collection. The statistics are to meet user needs and must be of good quality, while taking into account aspects such as resource use and respondent burden. An important starting point in preparing the plan has been to use, as far as possible, existing – that is, already collected – data for the production of the statistics. Special importance is given to administrative data from other government agencies. The goal is that future statistics are to be register-based and sample-assisted, rather than vice versa.

Key aspects of the work performed and the plan produced are presented below. The plan itself is presented in greater detail in the section *A plan for the future labour market statistics*.

²In the system for Official Statistics of Sweden (the SOS system), a statistical product, or “product” for short, refers to an established concept used to describe which statistics are being produced. Normally, there is a one-to-one relationship between a product and a statistical survey, although there are exceptions.

Focus on the relevance of the statistics³

Relevance, which is one of the main components in the concept of quality as regulated by Statistics Sweden's Ordinance on the quality of official statistics (SCB-FS 2016:17), has been the starting point for much of the work on Subject Area Design Labour Market. The Ordinance states that the concept of quality is to be used in the development and production of official statistics.

Relevance concerns how well the statistics address the questions that are important for users, given the considerations that has been made concerning their needs, associated quality requirements regarding the statistics, the cost of producing the statistics, and the respondent burden.

To ensure that future labour market statistics will be relevant, Statistics Sweden needs to have good insight into, and an understanding of, users' needs, and must be clear concerning the purpose of the statistics. Formally, this relates to the subcomponents *User information needs*, which deals with users' needs for statistical information, and the *purpose of the statistics*, which deals with the goal of the statistics; that is, which information needs the statistics intend to meet.

Understanding users' information needs

Only with good insight into and an understanding of users' needs can Statistics Sweden fulfil its commitment as an agency responsible for official statistics. This is why dialogue with users has been an important dimension of the work on Subject Design Labour Market and for drafting the plan presented in this report.

The work on subject area design has made clear that, in addition to Statistics Sweden's user groups⁴, Statistics Sweden should hold other types of dialogue with users to understand their needs. A gradual introduction of changes, in accordance with this report, prompts a need for Statistics Sweden to establish new forms of regular dialogue with key users concerning results, needs, and type of use. These dialogues will have two main purposes: to produce input for determining the purpose of the statistics and to include users in developing the statistics.

Clarifying the purpose of the statistics

The content of the statistics is to be determined based on documented user needs and international requirements. Different users have

³ The content of this section is partially based on the quality conception of official statistics. For further information, see *Kvalitet för den officiella statistiken, en handbok, version 2:2 (scb.se)*, (Statistics Sweden, 2020b).

⁴ See <https://www.scb.se/anvandarrad> (accessed 2021-05-17).

different needs. With its responsibility for official statistics, it follows that Statistics Sweden is responsible for evaluating and prioritising among those needs and for specifying the purpose of the statistics. Clarifying and communicating this has been an important part of the work on the subject area design.

When the purpose and quality requirements have been drawn up and specified, costs and respondent burden also need to be considered. The link between quality and cost is essential, although it can seldom be stated explicitly. The respondent burden is to be kept low by primarily using existing data and digital direct collection.

To enable an overview of the whole range, and to make it easier to understand the phenomena that the statistics are intended to highlight, statistical products are primarily named based on the content of the statistics, rather than, for example, the collection method.

Comparability is an important consideration

A clear-cut conclusion that can be drawn from the user dialogues held in the scope of Subject Area Design Labour Market is that comparability over time – as well as between groups – is a core user need that must be considered when specifying the purpose of the statistics. This is why it is a stated ambition that future labour market statistics must also enable comparisons over long periods of time for central target characteristics. When implementing the plan, this is an important aspect to consider.

The statistics are modernised and future-proofed

Design based on new conditions

To ensure that Statistics Sweden uses existing resources efficiently, and at the same time reduces the respondent burden, it is essential to establish an approach that, over time, leads to an increasing element of register-based statistics. The goal is to establish an approach that ensures **fully developed** register-based labour statistics at any given time, based on the prevailing conditions. This approach includes regularly evaluating the applied solutions, according to a set schedule, and actively working to increase use of existing data⁵ with a view to:

- improving the quality of the statistics;
- increasing resource efficiency; and
- reducing the respondent burden.

⁵This also includes data that is *not* used today in the scope of the production of official statistics.

Such an approach can be viewed as the implementation of Section 4 of the Official Statistics Ordinance (SFS 2001:100):

Data for official statistics shall be collected in such a way as to make the response process

- 1. as simple as possible,*
- 2. in proportion to users' needs, and*
- 3. a reasonable burden on the respondents.*

In their production of official statistics, the statistical agencies are to use information for existing registers to the greatest extent possible.

Smart data capture

Systematic efforts to ensure and increase access to data, including administrative data, is an important task for Statistics Sweden. Central elements include external monitoring and cooperation with potential data suppliers. Ultimately, it is a matter of taking responsibility for the use of resources and the respondent burden. This may also include the need for Statistics Sweden to work actively with other government agencies to increase access to relevant administrative data. This may involve new data as well as existing data that becomes available at a higher frequency, for example monthly. Partially new forms of cooperation may be set up to ensure that needs related to the implementation of the plan are taken into account.

Direct collection of data also needed in the future

Despite an increasing focus on register-based statistics, direct collection of data will also be needed in the future as a basis for:

- evaluating the quality of register-based statistics;
- estimating models that can be used to produce statistics; and
- producing statistics concerning information needs that cannot be met using register data.

Sample sizes, survey scope and frequency of the statistics will be determined by and adapted to access to register data, prioritised user needs, and Eurostat⁶ and International Labour Organisation (ILO) requirements.⁷ However, the overarching aim is that the future labour

⁶See Statistics Sweden (2020a).

⁷In addition to international regulations Statistics Sweden's appropriation directions state that the agency shall deliver data from the Labour Force Surveys to the Government Offices to the agreed level of detail and in a format adapted to the Government Offices' needs.

market statistics are to be register-based and sample-assisted, rather than sample-based and register-assisted.

More analysis – expanded content and improved capacity

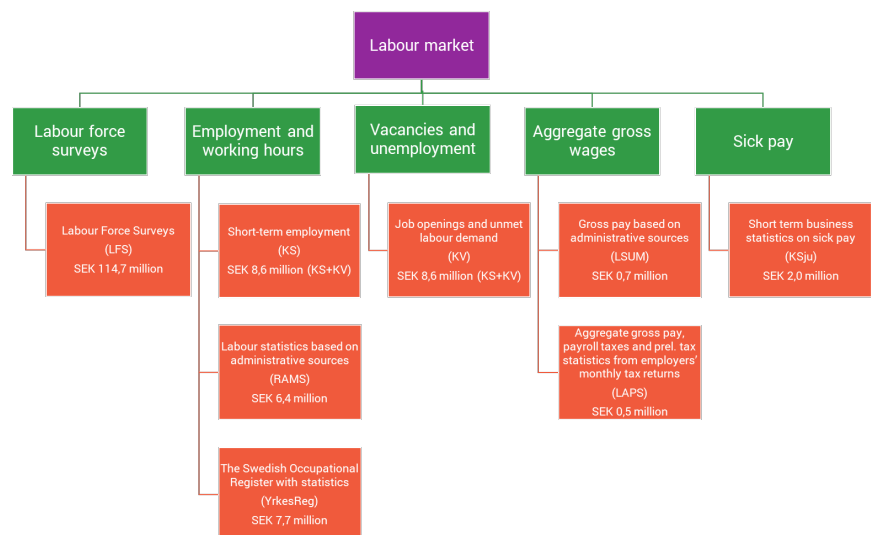
In utilising the potential provided by greater use of existing data, in terms of coherency and reducing direct collection, resources will be freed up in the long run. At the same time, more resources will be needed for the production of new statistics, and to perform further analyses. The latter will include carrying out more analysis-related activities to better explain the statistics and put them in a context, as well as adding other statistics and analysis as needed. Thus, it is a matter of production and quality assurance, as well as reporting and communication of statistics.

To realise the potential of greater use of existing data, Statistics Sweden needs to consider an increased use of more complex methods – and models – in its statistical production. At the same time, the more complex methods are used, the greater the analysis capacity and capability need to be. Thus, analysis capacity and capability partly need to be dimensioned based on the type of methods and models that Statistics Sweden intends to use going forward.

A plan for the future labour market statistics

This section includes a description of the plan that Statistics Sweden will use to develop the labour market statistics during the period from 2021 to 2025. The plan is described using text and figures that show the intended product structure at various points in time along the road to modernised and future-proof labour market statistics. The starting position for Statistics Sweden in terms of official statistics in the subject area Labour Market is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Statistics Sweden’s current statistical areas and products within the subject area Labour Market (appropriations income 2020)



Green rectangles in Figure 1 indicate the statistical areas⁸ for which Statistics Sweden is responsible today, while orange rectangles indicate the products that make up official statistics. The statistics are reported *yearly* for Labour statistics based on administrative sources (RAMS), Gross pay based on administrative sources (LSUM), and the Swedish Occupational Register with statistics (YrkesReg), *quarterly* for Aggregate gross pay, payroll taxes and preliminary tax statistics from employers’

⁸ A review of all statistical areas is under way within the scope of the Council for Official Statistics. This review is expected to result in a request to the Government during 2021. Subject Area Design Labour Market has taken part in the process of proposing the statistical areas for which Statistics Sweden should be responsible.

monthly tax returns (LAPS), Short-term business statistics on sick pay (KSju), Job openings and unmet labour demand (KV), and Short-term employment (KS), and *monthly* for the LFS. In addition, for the LFS, statistics on the reference periods' quarter and year are reported quarterly and yearly.

Future structure

After the plan has been implemented, in 2025 Statistics Sweden will be responsible for two statistical areas under the subject area Labour Market. Each statistical area will contain one statistical product. The breakdown of these products will be based on information needs, rather than, for example, the underlying survey or data source. For both these products, some estimates will be based on register data, while others will be based on data collected within the framework of a sample survey. Going forward, the term “hybrid product” will be used to refer to a product with these characteristics.

A number of steps need to be taken along the way in order to achieve this goal. The plan for the future labour market statistics is therefore divided into three stages. These are illustrated by figures that show the intended product structure at every point in time. Each figure shows which products are new (yellow rectangles), and how previous products (white rectangles) fall under these. All products aim to meet information needs, although this is not explicitly stated in the figures⁹. For an overview of information needs in the labour market statistics, see Appendix 3 in *Ämnesdesign Arbetsmarknad, huvudbilaga 4: FURBAS slutrapport* (Statistics Sweden, 2021g)¹⁰.

The various sections of the plan are explained based on how they meet user needs, are able to reduce the respondent burden, or reduce production costs¹¹, or several of these in combination. The plan includes references to the appendices that contain further information about the rationale behind each section.

Plan in the short term

In the short term, the period 2021–2022, a new, mainly register-based statistical product will be established in the labour market area – Population by Labour Market Status (BAS). This product will form the basis of register-based statistics regarding individuals in the labour market. Part of the content will include the statistics that are currently presented in the context of the three existing statistical products.

⁹ For products included in the plan in the medium and long term, part of the work going forward will consist of evaluating and prioritising needs in detail to determine the purpose of the statistics.

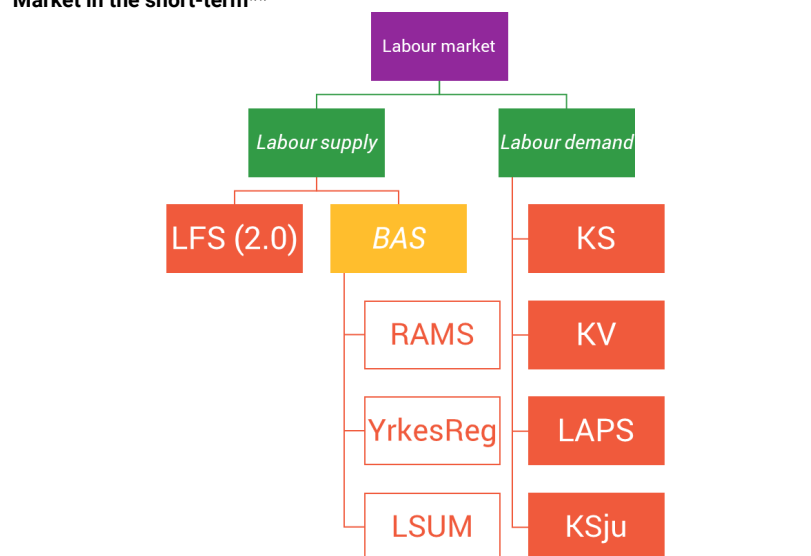
¹⁰ FURBAS addresses the question *Fully register-based labour market statistics – how far can you go?*

¹¹ Productivity in Statistics Sweden's appropriation activities is to increase by at least 3 percent on average (see Statistics Sweden's appropriation directions for 2021).

However, BAS will have more content, and thereby address more needs, possibly also for users who currently use the LFS as their main source of information on the progression of the labour market.

The goal is to develop BAS from a supplement to statistics based on data that is directly collected, such as the LFS, to enable replacing parts of such statistics. In addition, Statistics Sweden will continue to develop the sampling design and estimation procedure in the LFS in order to improve accuracy. Figure 2 shows a summary of the plan in the short term.

Figure 2. Statistics Sweden’s statistical areas* and products in the subject area Labour Market in the short-term**



* The statistical areas in the figure are based on a future breakdown in the statistical areas. Until the new statistical areas are determined, BAS needs to be handled in a way that will work with today’s statistical area breakdown.

** Text in italics refers to proposed designation, yellow rectangles indicate a new product and white rectangles indicate a product that is being replaced by a product in a yellow rectangle.

Population by Labour Market Status – future register-based labour market statistics on the supply side

Statistics Sweden will introduce the product BAS as of 2022. BAS will be a hybrid product, but it will be mainly register-based. The AGI from the Swedish Tax Agency will be a central data source for BAS. These data will be supplemented by other register data from several other government agencies¹². BAS will meet information needs that are currently being met by the products RAMS, YrkesReg¹⁵ and LSUM. This

¹² In addition to the Swedish Tax Agency, there are currently plans to use information from the Swedish Social Insurance Agency, the Swedish Pensions Agency, the Swedish Board of Student Finance, and the National Board of Health and Welfare.

¹⁵ The content of the YrkesReg is based on information that, to a large extent, is directly collected in the scope of the system of official statistics. This is partly information collected in the scope of the

means that, in an initial step, Statistics Sweden's official statistical products will be reduced from today's eight, to six products.

The introduction of BAS will result in expanded register-based content with more target characteristics and a higher frequency than today's register-based labour market statistics. The latter, in particular, will be a major change compared with today. In the short term, this will mean a raised level of ambition for Statistics Sweden's production of labour market statistics. For further information on BAS, see Statistics Sweden (2021g). For further information on the user needs underpinning the BAS proposal, see *Ämnesdesign Arbetsmarknad, huvudbilaga 2: Användarbehov inom arbetsmarknadsstatistiken* (Statistics Sweden, 2021e).

Reporting in BAS will be expanded gradually. A first version of BAS will be presented in the second quarter of 2022 and will contain monthly and quarterly estimates for the first quarter of 2022. After that, the statistics will be presented on a quarterly basis, with corresponding content. By the end of 2022, Statistics Sweden will create conditions for monthly access to monthly estimates. During 2022, Statistics Sweden will also present monthly and quarterly estimates for the reference years 2020 and 2021.

BAS will not initially constitute official statistics. However, by the start of 2023, BAS will include the statistics that are currently presented in the scope of RAMS, YrkesReg and LSUM, and will constitute official statistics.

LFS 2.0 – further work to improve accuracy

During the period 2021–2022, accuracy in the LFS will be further improved through even better use of existing register data. Changes that will be introduced will be based on today's sample size, with a view to maximising the benefit of existing register data. This can be seen as a practical application of the approach of reviewing the opportunities of using more register data in the scope of LFS production, to ensure that Statistics Sweden has fully developed register-based labour market statistics for the period. For further information on fully developed register-based statistics, see Statistics Sweden (2021g).

These efforts aim to ensure that existing resources are used even more efficiently. A considerable share of LFS costs is related to data collection, which is currently carried out via telephone interviews. As it

statistics on wage structure, for which the National Mediation Office is the responsible statistical agency, and partly information collected through the Occupational Register's own collection. For additional information, see [Statistikens framställning Yrkesregistret med yrkesstatistik, 2019 \(scb.se\)](#), (Statistics Sweden, 2021c).

has become increasingly difficult to reach, and conduct interviews with, selected persons for the LFS, an increasingly large share of resources has been focused on efforts aimed at increasing the response rate. Since such efforts tend to be more resource-intensive than carrying out interviews, at the same time, the non-response trend has led to higher costs for LFS data collection. For further information on non-response over time in the LFS, see Appendix 2 in Statistics Sweden (2021d).

As an initial step, an EU-financed project will be carried out in 2021 with the goal of completing the alignment of the LFS to the new European legislation that applies as of 2021. This task includes an overview of the LFS from a sampling and estimation perspective. Work on the sampling design aims to utilise existing register data, in particular the AGI, to adapt it to the precision requirements resulting from the new legislation. Work on the estimation procedure involves investigating the composition of the auxiliary vector that is used to determine whether it is possible to further improve the solution introduced in 2021 following the investigation presented in Statistics Sweden (2020c; 2021b). The investigation concerning the estimation procedure is expected to be completed by mid-2021, while work on the sampling design is expected to be completed by November 2021.

In 2022, a modified auxiliary vector will be introduced in the estimation procedure, with the aim of further improving accuracy. Also, further investigations will be performed with the aim of further improving the estimation and sampling procedures. Another important task will be establishing the main characteristics of a sampling design that aims to comply, at the lowest possible cost, with the accuracy requirements that Statistics Sweden decides must be met.

A working method will be established for the purpose of ensuring that Statistics Sweden regularly verifies whether direct data collection can be replaced with register data. Furthermore, preparations will take place for the introduction of mixed mode data collection, with an online questionnaire as an alternative to a telephone interview, as of 2023.

BAS and LFS – coherent analysis and communication

The introduction of BAS, which contains target characteristics that touch on some of the target characteristics included in the LFS, as well as the Swedish Public Employment Service's operational statistics, places high demands on Statistics Sweden's ability to coherently analyse various statistical sources. This work will begin even before the introduction of BAS, but it is an ongoing task that will remain in place over time. In addition, the analyses that will be performed need to be clearly communicated, so that the various purposes of the statistics are clarified to users. During this period, procedures and working methods will be drafted for both coherent analysis and the communication of results.

Further efforts for the next step of the plan

During the period 2021–2022, further work, both investigative and preparatory, needs to be done in order to take the next step in the plan. A number of such activities are listed below:

- Further develop BAS – steps toward BAS 2.0
 - Investigate how occupational data can be collected and used – the content of YrkesReg consists, to a large extent, of data that are directly collected, resulting in a large respondent burden for small enterprises
- Establish a design for the new medium-term product *Employment*. This includes:
 - detailed inventory of users’ information needs that must be addressed
 - ensuring that the design choices and solutions proposed in the plan in the medium term are in alignment with current European legislation¹⁴
 - investigating a new sampling design
- Establish a design for the medium-term new product *Need for labour*. This includes:
 - detailed identification of user’s information needs that must be addressed by the statistics
 - investigating a new sampling design
 - reviewing the possibilities of using register-based data as a base for a part of the statistics
- Complete the activity that was begun for the purpose of investigating whether the needs for statistics on hours worked, not least in the National Accounts, can be met with the help of sources other than the LFS.

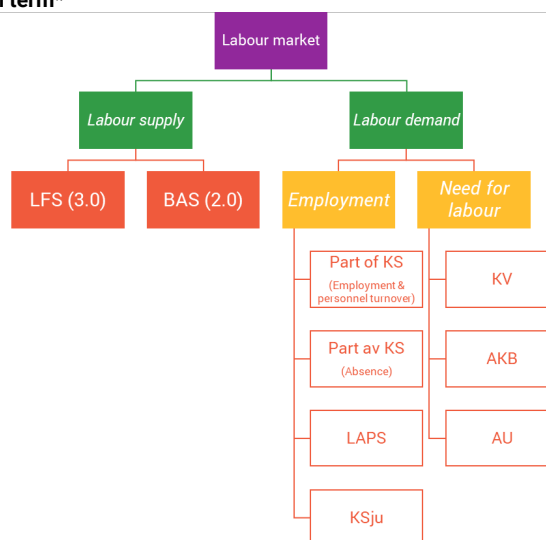
Plan in the medium term

In the medium term, in the period 2023–2024, focus will be on exploiting the opportunities provided by AGI in the statistical area *Labour demand*. This means that an even larger part of the labour market statistics will be register-based, and that the amount of directly collected data will be reduced.

¹⁴(EU) 2019/2152) of the European Parliament and of the Council

The products will also be adapted at this stage, resulting in fewer products. In total six products, two of which are currently not classified as official statistics, will be replaced by two new products. One of these products will make use of the opportunities provided by AGI, while the other product will provide a comprehensive approach on information needs concerning employers' demands for labour. The two new products from the demand side can be considered to represent met and unmet demand for labour. Also, further efforts will be made to adapt the sampling design and estimation procedure in the LFS, with the objective of meeting set quality requirements at the lowest possible cost. Figure 3 shows a summary of the plan in the medium term.

Figure 3. Statistics Sweden's statistical areas and products in the subject area Labour Market in the medium term*



*Text in italics refers to proposed designation, yellow rectangles refer to a new product and white rectangles refer to a product that is being replaced by a product in a yellow rectangle.

Employment

As of 2023, Statistics Sweden will introduce a new statistical product in the labour market area, with the working name Employment. This is a hybrid product that will replace today's KS, LAPS and KSju.

The periodicity will initially be quarterly, but in the long term, both periodicity and reporting will follow BAS. Investigation work carried out in the scope of Subject Area Design Labour Market points to the potential of replacing parts of the data currently directly collected in KS with data from the AGI, although some key issues remain to be investigated. The product Employment assumes that these have been addressed satisfactorily and will reduce the amount of direct data collection. Furthermore, the need for direct collection has been coordinated in the scope of a single sample survey, rather than today's two, with a main focus on data on absence.

In addition to reducing the respondent burden, Employment will create better conditions for coherence between the various components of the

statistics. When the statistics produced today in the scope of various products will be combined into a single product, there will be a need for a comprehensive description of the statistics, with a focus on coherence and numerical consistency. The use of AGI also creates conditions for numerical consistency between parts of the supply and demand side of the statistical description of the Swedish labour market. For further information on the background to the proposal, see Statistics Sweden (2021g).

Need for labour

As of 2023, three existing surveys directed at employers will be merged into a single survey concerning the need for labour. This survey will address the main user needs that are currently met by KV, the Labour Market Tendency Survey (AKB), and the Swedish Public Employment Service's employer survey (AU).

This proposal is under investigation and the inquiry is expected to be completed by the end of 2021. For further information on the status of the inquiry, see Statistics Sweden (2021a). A merger would reduce the respondent burden and free up resources for both Statistics Sweden and the Swedish Public Employment Service.

BAS 2.0 – further development of BAS

As of 2023, BAS will be classified as official statistics. Statistics Sweden will present monthly estimates for the reference period month. BAS has been expanded with more statistics mainly based on register data. This will lead to more comprehensive reporting, and may include supplementary employment measurements, statistics on economic compensation combined with labour market status, and statistics on hours worked.

LFS 3.0 – focus on alignment to framework regulation and innovative methods

As of 2023, the LFS will use mixed mode data collection. In addition to telephone interviews, an online survey questionnaire will also be used. During this period, the emphasis will be on further investigating and gradually introducing changes with the aim of reducing costs primarily for LFS data collection, while also ensuring that set quality requirements can be met.

In 2023, the sampling design that will be used going forward will be established and preparations for its introduction will be made, with the goal of introducing a new sampling design as of 2024. However, as this is a complex task, both in terms of investigation and implementation, it is possible that a new sampling design will not be introduced until 2025.

LFS 3.0 will also lead to a greater element of model use. This includes increased use of complex and computer-intensive methods, with the

goal of establishing an estimation procedure that will improve accuracy. BAS 2.0 is an important data source in this context.

Employment and Need for labour – coherent analysis and communication

As a result of the introduction of the products Employment and Need for labour, Statistics Sweden will need to continue to work on questions linked to coherent analysis and communication of official statistics that concern the demand side of the labour market.

Further efforts for the next step of the plan

For the final step in the plan for future labour market statistics, the following efforts need to be made in the medium term:

- Investigate and establish a plan for how to combine BAS and LFS into a common product
- Investigate and establish a plan for how to combine Employment and Need for labour into a common product

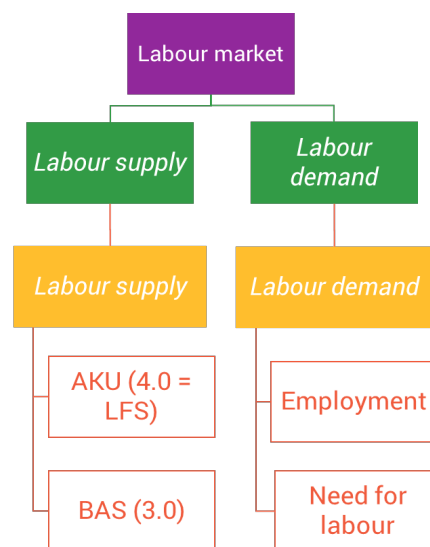
In both cases, the emphasis will be on questions linked to analysis and communication, with the objective of better explaining the statistics and placing them in a larger context. This also includes clearly communicating the purpose of the statistics for various selected target characteristics.

Plan in the long term

In the long term, as of 2025, the labour market statistics for which Statistics Sweden is responsible will consist of two products, one per statistical area. Both products are hybrids; that is, some statistical values will be based on register data, while others will be based on directly collected data. As each product comprises internally coherent and consistent statistics, the boundary between register-based and sample-based statistics becomes less relevant. This indicates a clear shift from today's statistics that are mainly sample-based with register-based elements, to statistics that can be described as register-based with sample-based elements. Conditions for coherence and co-analysis of various elements of the statistics have improved and value added can be created for users, for example in the form of expanded content or improved descriptions of the statistics.

The respondent burden has decreased significantly. Given the circumstances, the statistics are fully developed in terms of the use of existing register data. Figure 4 shows a summary of the plan in the long term.

Figure 4. Statistics Sweden's statistical areas and products in the subject area Labour Market in the long term*



*Text in italics refers to proposed designation, yellow rectangles refer to a new product and white rectangles refer to a product that is being replaced by a product in a yellow rectangle.

Labour supply

In the long term, BAS and LFS will be merged into a hybrid product. A brief description of the components' design follows below.

BAS 3.0 – continued further development of BAS

BAS 3.0 will be expanded with statistics based on register data, as new, relevant data are added. An approach has been established that will ensure active cooperation with other actors, with a view to increasing access to relevant data. Other government agencies and their administrative data constitute a central element. Statistics Sweden is working actively to make it easier for employers to supplement data submitted via the AGI with other data present in, or in connection to, frequently used administrative systems.

Examples of data that Statistics Sweden, based on users' needs, would like to have access to and include in BAS:

- Type of employment
- Hours worked
- Working period that the salary payment refers to
- Agreed working hours
- Agreement form
- Parental benefit supplement
- Holidays and other time off work and related remuneration
- Sick leave and related remuneration

- Extent of employment
- Agreed wages or salary

LFS 4.0

The estimation procedure and sampling design in the LFS is adapted to, and essentially based on, explicitly worded quality requirements. The quality requirements mainly have their starting point in European regulatory requirements and have been determined after consultation with key users. The objective of LFS 4.0 is to meet the quality requirements at the lowest possible cost of data collection.

Labour demand

In the long term, the products Employment and Need for labour will be merged into a single product. A brief description of the component design follows below.

Employment

Statistics Sweden is working actively to streamline collection of data related to absence, with the ambition of increasing the amount of data that can be collected using “machine-to-machine” technology. An important dimension of this work involves ensuring that the requested data as far as possible correspond to the data present in, or in connection to, administrative systems, not least salary systems, that many respondents use.

Need for labour

Statistics Sweden is working actively to streamline collection of data related to the need for labour. An important dimension of this work involves ensuring that data on job ads can be collected from the Swedish Public Employment Service’s and utilised when deemed possible.

A modified approach has been introduced

At the start of 2025, Statistics Sweden introduces a way of working in which access to, and the potential of, new data sources are regularly evaluated. Both the content of the labour market statistics and more important design choices underlying the production of the statistics, such as choices of data sources and estimation procedures, are regularly tested against prevailing conditions. This presumes excellent knowledge of which data are held by other parties and how they could be used in the production of labour market statistics. Elements of this work are carried out within the scope of the Council for Official Statistics, but also involve bilateral cooperation with other government agencies and actors.

One way to achieve this is to use, even more clearly, the information needs in labour market statistics as the starting point. For further information on these, see Statistics Sweden (2021g).

The plan – background

The main conclusions of the work on Subject Area Design Labour Market are described in the present report. The report includes four main appendices and related sub-appendices.¹⁵ The plan is based on aspects that have emerged within the scope of the work that was carried out. The main appendices are briefly described below.

Main Appendix 1: The task and its implementation

The assignment on which Subject Area Design Labour Market is based is described in Statistics Sweden (2021d). In addition, it provides information on how the work under Subject Area Design Labour Market was carried out, including cooperation with the Swedish Public Employment Service, the Swedish Work Environment Authority and the Swedish National Mediation Office. This appendix also contains a description of the emergence and present status of the Swedish labour market statistics.

Main Appendix 2: User needs in labour market statistics

Statistics Sweden (2021e) describes the main user needs identified during the course of the work and how they tie in with the proposals presented in the plan for future labour market statistics.

Main Appendix 3: International outlook with a focus on administrative data

Ämnesdesign Arbetsmarknad, huvudbilaga 3: Internationell utblick med fokus på administrativa data (Statistics Sweden, 2021f) offers an international outlook on labour market statistics. There is a specific focus on other countries' use of administrative data sources for the production of labour market statistics.

Main Appendix 4: FURBAS final report

Statistics Sweden (2021g) is the most comprehensive main appendix. It constitutes Subject Area Design Labour Market's main inquiry and has served as an umbrella for many of the investigations, with a view to ensuring that Statistics Sweden has fully developed register-based labour market statistics in the future.

¹⁵ For a list of all main and sub-appendices, see Appendix 1.

Impact assessment

This section provides a brief description of the expected impact of the implementation of the plan presented in the section *A plan for the future labour market statistics*.

Consequences at a general level

The plan presented herein will lead to changes in Statistics Sweden's formal statistical responsibility in terms of statistical areas and statistical products. The plan involves a shift from the current situation, in which a product is typically based on *one* collection activity or data source, to a future situation with fewer, but more comprehensive in terms of content, products based on the information needs to be met.

The future labour market statistics will be based on register data to a considerably larger extent than today. In line with a growing proportion of statistics becoming register-based, at the same time changes are being introduced that aim to reduce the need for data acquired through direct collection. The overarching aim is that the future labour market statistics are to be register-based and sample-assisted, rather than sample-based and register-assisted. This shift means not only changes in opportunities, but also in risk. For both Statistics Sweden and statistics users, the transition will be extensive and challenging. However, Statistics Sweden considers this transition to be necessary due to the challenges linked to non-response in the LFS, with implications for both the quality of the statistics and the costs of production. To facilitate the transition, it is important that the plan be implemented in consultation with users.

Greater reliance on existing data, not least administrative data from other government agencies, means that the production of statistics will be dependent on decisions underpinning the existence of these data. Also, the larger the part of the statistics that are based on the same data, the more the quality of the statistics will rely on the quality of these data. This is why it is essential for Statistics Sweden to maintain ongoing consultation with the holders of administrative data, in order to ensure early knowledge of changes being discussed or planned. Although greater reliance on existing data is not entirely without risk, it must be placed in relation to today's situation, with heavy reliance on direct data collection. Beyond the quality of the statistics, which is negatively affected by non-response, both the costs of data collection and the implications for the respondent burden must be considered.

Adding to this is that administrative microdata typically has a different quality than directly collected data. In direct collection, survey questionnaires are adapted for the purpose, with the objective of reducing measurement uncertainty, while administrative data are

collected for each respective administrative purpose with little or no connection to the production of the statistics. This does not mean that statistics based on direct data collection by definition have better quality than those based on administrative data, or vice versa. Which statistics are fit for purpose is determined by the user and follows from how the statistics are to be used and how the user values different quality components.

Another general consequence of the plan, which also follows from increased use of existing data, is that conditions for coherence of different elements of the statistics will be improved. For example, this applies to statistics that use AGI, in which certain estimates will be numerically consistent, both within and between products. At the same time, when the same data forms the basis of a large number of statistical values, these statistics cannot be regarded as statistically independent. For users who currently make combined use of statistics from different products, specifically with statistical independence in mind, the plan entails partially new conditions.

More product-oriented consequences

Introducing BAS

There are several consequences of introducing BAS:

- Expanded content for the register-based labour market statistics.
 - More information about the population – better conditions for performing breakdowns into smaller groups on a monthly and quarterly basis. This concerns the possibilities of using the statistics at a regional level in particular.
- Increased reliance on administrative data held by other government agencies. This places great demands on dialogue between Statistics Sweden and the relevant agencies.
- To create value added for users, statistics from BAS and the LFS need to be related to each other and the differences described and explained. This type of coherent analysis needs to be performed regularly.
- According to BAS, the definition of unemployed persons will be based in part on register-based data from the Swedish Public Employment Service. BAS therefore needs to be related to and coherently analysed with the Swedish Public Employment Service's operational statistics on registered unemployed persons. Statistics Sweden and the Swedish Public Employment Service should pursue uniform and coherent communication for the presentation of these statistics.

Implementing Employment

- The introduction must be preceded by a number of investigative and preparatory actions. Therefore, in the short and the medium term, major efforts will be required from people with subject-matter knowledge, although knowledge of statistical methods and the collection process will also be required.
- Combined with the introduction of Need for labour, this will lead to a markedly reduced respondent burden for enterprises.

Changes in the LFS

- The introduction must be preceded by a number of investigative and preparatory actions. In the short and the medium term, major actions will be required from people with knowledge of statistical methods.
- Reduced respondent burden and costs for data collection in the long term.
- A reduced sample size in the LFS may affect the possibility of using the survey to carry out supplementary surveys. This means that both the total respondent burden and the total cost of data collection *may* increase.
 - The Swedish Work Environment Agency already considers the sample size in the LFS to be too small for their purposes, which is why, in collaboration with Statistics Sweden, they are preparing to carry out two surveys – Work-related disorders and the Work Environment Survey – using a new approach. For further information, see Appendix 7 in Statistics Sweden (2021d). The new procedure will lead to a slightly increased respondent burden for individuals.
 - Statistics Sweden will take over responsibility from the Swedish Public Employment Service for the survey The labour market situation for people with disabilities, and has received a government remit concerning future implementation of the survey. There are compelling reasons, in terms of content and resources, to continue to carry out the survey as a supplementary survey to the LFS. A reduction in the sample size of the LFS may affect the possibilities of conducting the supplementary survey in accordance with intended design, with consequences for users and increased costs of data collection as a result.

Introducing Need for labour

- The introduction must be preceded by a number of investigative and preparatory actions. In the short term, therefore, major actions are required from people with knowledge of statistical methodology.
- Combined with the introduction of Employment, this will lead to a markedly reduced respondent burden for enterprises.

- Clearly reduced data collection costs.

Introducing Labour supply

- This requires increased capacity for analysis and communication, in order to better explain the statistics and place them in a context.

Introducing Labour demand

- This requires increased capacity for analysis and communication, in order to better explain the statistics and place them in a context.

Conclusion

During the period 2019–2021, Statistics Sweden has carried out extensive development work within the labour market statistics, referred to as Subject Area Design Labour Market. This work was performed in cooperation with the Swedish Public Employment Service, the Swedish Work Environment Authority and the Swedish National Mediation Office, as well as users of the labour market statistics. The ambition has been to use an iterative process, in which other relevant government agencies, as well as users, on several occasions have been informed about and been given the opportunity to comment on the ongoing work.

These efforts culminated in the plan presented in this report. The objective has been to produce a plan that meets important user needs, while at the same time reducing dependence on direct collection. Only with the help of good insight into and an understanding of users' needs can Statistics Sweden fulfil its commitment as a statistical agency. This is why consultation with users has been an important element of the work. A clear takeaway of the user consultations has been that comparability, over time and between groups, is a key quality component for many users that must be considered when the plan is implemented. An important starting point for drawing up the plan was the use of existing data as far as possible in the production of the statistics. The plan places particular emphasis on administrative data from other government agencies.

The aim of Subject Area Design Labour Market has been to take a comprehensive approach on all official statistics for which Statistics Sweden is responsible within the subject area Labour Market. This involved extensive work and the present report describes the plan for future work. Going forward, there is great breadth in terms of the nature of the work. Some parts are currently being implemented or implementation will soon be possible, while other parts will require considerable development and analysis.

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(*): reference only available in Swedish

Appendix 1: Main and sub-appendices

Below is a complete list of the four main appendices and related sub-appendices, all available only in Swedish, included in the reporting of Subject Area Design Labour Market.

The task and its implementation

Statistiska centralbyrån (2021). Ämnesdesign Arbetsmarknad, huvudbilaga 1: Uppdrag och genomförande. Statistiska centralbyrån.

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Statistics Sweden describes Sweden

Statistics Sweden provides society with statistics for decision-making, debate and research on behalf of the Government, government agencies, researchers and industry. These statistics contribute to fact-based public debate and informed decisions.