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## DEVELOPING METHODS FOR MEASURING ICT-USAGE IN NORDIC COMPANIES

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*This room document presents a status report on a project sponsored by the Nordic Council of Ministers. It is submitted for information by Statistics Sweden under Item 6.3 of the draft agenda.*

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## **DEVELOPING METHODS FOR MEASURING ICT-USAGE IN NORDIC COMPANIES**

### **Foreword**

The Nordic Council of Ministers has after an application from the national Nordic statistical institutes decided to sponsor a project which aims at developing methods for measuring ICT-usage in Nordic companies. Core participants in the group are Statistics Denmark, Statistics Finland, Statistics Iceland, Statistics Norway and Statistics Sweden. The Swedish national Board for Industrial and Technical development has observer status since they have done a lot of work in this field. Sweden is through Statistics Sweden the leading country and will therefore act as project leader. The project started with first meeting in March 1998 and will end with a final report in December 1998.

### **Background**

Usage of ICT in companies in the Nordic countries is seen as a tool for strengthening the competitiveness of the region. ICT can as a tool be used for a lot of tasks, for example electronic commerce, business communication and restructuring organisations. To get a picture of in which extent ICT is used in different sectors of trade and industry it is necessary to collect data through surveys. Data from a survey is always more interesting and usable if it is comparable with other countries and over time. The project described in this paper therefore aims at developing guidelines for measuring ICT usage in companies in the same way in the Nordic countries. The guidelines will hopefully also be usable under a number of years which will make data comparable over time. If other countries show interest for using the guidelines it would act as a value adding process both for the Nordic and non-Nordic countries since this will produce a bigger frame for comparisons. The questions that will be developed to be used in the survey will reflect a common need for information in all the Nordic countries. Each country will thereafter have an option of adding own question that will satisfy a country specific information need.

### **Aim of the project**

The project aims at developing guidelines for measuring usage of ICT in Nordic companies. Special emphasis will be put on developing methods for measuring small and medium sized companies. The guidelines will have the form of a manual that will be ready by the end of 1998.

### **Carrying out of the project**

The Nordic group will meet four times when most of the work will be carried out.

Between these meetings Statistics Sweden will, as representative for the leading country, put together the results and communicate it with the other Nordic countries and prepare for the next meeting. The project will also have country-specific tasks that will be carried out between the meeting as for example finding out national needs of statistics on ICT-usage in companies. The work in the project will be carried out according to the following plan:

### **Meeting1**

*Held: 19-20 March*

- Discussion on information needs in the field of IT-usage in companies.
- Presentation of earlier experiences in this area.

#### *Tasks between meeting 1 and 2*

- Discussion of information needs in the field of IT-usage in companies according to meeting 1.
- Each country should compile a list on areas of interest on IT-usage in companies with help of the *distributed list on suggestions on areas of interest* and think about related questions.
- Sweden will make an investigation on what kind of background variables that are available and relevant in the Nordic countries.

### **Meeting2**

*Held: 5-4 June*

- Accounting of discussions of information need on IT-usage in companies held in each country and presentation of national list on areas of interest.
- First discussion on questions for surveying IT-usage in companies.
- Accounting of the results on what kind of background variables that are available and relevant in the Nordic countries
- Further discussions on the frame and methods for surveying IT-usage in companies.

#### *Tasks between meeting 2 and 3*

- Sweden will put together the countries proposals for areas of interests and questions into a draft for questionnaire.
- Distribution of the draft for questionnaire to each country.
- Discussion of the draft for questionnaire in each country.
- Sweden will make a proposal for a synopsis for the manual and distribute it to each country.
- Further discussions on the frame and methods for surveying IT-usage in companies.

### **Meeting3**

*Held: preliminary end of August*

- Discussion of the draft for questionnaire.
- Discussion of the proposal for synopsis for the manual.

#### *Tasks between meeting 3 and 4*

- Sweden will write different version of drafts for a manual and distribute this by means of e-mail and through this have a discussion on the content of the manual with the other countries.

### **Meeting4**

*Held: preliminary the middle of November*

- Final discussion on the manual on measuring IT-usage in companies in the Nordic countries.

*After meeting 4*

- Sweden will put the final touch on the manual and there after distribute the manual, in December, to the Nordic Council of Ministries and each Nordic country. A copy will also be sent to Eurostat and OECD's Statistical panel.

### **Results from the projects so far**

The project has so far had two meetings one in March and one in the beginning of June. This report should therefore be considered as a status report since there are no final results. The work that has been carried out has mainly focused on identifying country-specific needs of statistics on ICT-usage in companies and through that identifying a common Nordic need of statistics in this area. National priorities have been made by using a common list on areas where ICT is used in companies (annex 1). These priorities have then been used to compile a list on areas that are of special interest from a common Nordic point of view.

#### *Preferred areas*

##### *1. Use of ICT*

- Electronic commerce
- Use of Internet
- Broad areas where ICT is used  
(Planning and managing, Reporting and following up, Production processes, and soon )

##### *2. Expenditures for ICT-level of detail for:*

- Investments
- Costs

##### *3. Organisation*

- Personal
- Infrastructure
- Outsourcing

The above has also been used, during the second meeting, when discussing what questions that can be used for surveying ICT-usage in companies. As a starting point for these discussions already used and proposal for surveys from the Nordic countries and Netherlands has been used. From that starting point a choice has been made for a gross list of questions that should be used, during meeting 3 in August, as a base for a final discussion on a common Nordic survey on ICT-usage in companies. The gross list of questions will be compiled during the summer and sent to the Nordic countries for comments. The countries will then also be asked to comment on preferred scope and method when surveying ICT-usage in companies.

## **Annex1**

### *Suggestions for itemsonalisonareasofinterest*

- Electroniccommerce
- Useofe-mail
- Ifcompanieshasahomepageatthewwwandwhatthereasonforthisis
- Useofwwwforgatheringinformation
- Useofintranet
- Useofelectronicbulletinboards
- Useofgroupware(LousNotes,FirstClassandsimilarprograms)
- Teleworking
- Reasons for not being able to use ICT (example: consultants, hardware/software to expensive and lackofeducation)
- ICTcompetence(educationandskillslevel)
- InvestmentsinandcostforICT
- KindofICTequipment(hardware/software)usedandICT-infrastructure(networks)
- AreaswhereICTisusedincompanies
- EffectsfromtheuseofICTontheorganisationofcompanies
- OutsourcingofIT-relatedtasks
- UseofEDI
- Ifcompaniesupplytheiremployeeswithhomecomputers
- What speed of data communication that is used when companies communicates with the outside world