

## Government e-Link

(Extract from CoRD 041 "A brief outline on existing data collection tools and new developments at Statistics Sweden", Hans Irebäck, 2001)

The broad acceptance of the Internet makes it possible for public organisations to offer increased services to citizens and enterprises. A necessary prerequisite is that the information exchanged will be standardised and secured. The Government e-Link was originally an initiative from a working group called Top Managers Forum, led by the Minister of Finance. As the work has continued, the Swedish Agency for Administrative Development, the National Social Insurance Board and the National Tax Board have assumed leading roles. Statistics Sweden is a member of the Government e-Link Forum and the Government e-Link Working Group. Government e-Link is expected to become an important part of the Swedish information infrastructure in the next few years. The costs for managing the exchange of information between public authorities can be reduced drastically when the process can be standardised and carried out via the Internet. One of the main functions in the Government e-Link concept is the standardised label that is attached to every document or message sent. This label is created as an XML document and contains information about the sender, receiver and type of document. Government e-Link does not require standardisation of the documents or data files that are exchanged. It is therefore technically possible to exchange all types of documents. However, this means that the communicating parties still need to agree on the data formats used in exchanging information. The first version of Government e-Link is now available and supports secure communication between governmental organisations. Future versions will also extend to enterprises and citizens.

Government e-Link is also expected to help the public authorities in their efforts to collect specific information from a respondent only once. By defining agreements in the Government e-Link system, information collected from a respondent can be distributed to several different authorities.

Statistics Sweden will start a pilot project with Government e-Link later this year. As a the greater part of data are collected from other governmental authorities registers Government e-Link is expected to play an important role in Statistics Sweden data collection infrastructure in the future.

A document with a description of the Government e-Link system is available on CIRCA (doc. Ref. CoRD031 Government e-Link: Generic services for eGovernment and IDA Application Services (Sweden)).