

Strategy

2024–2028



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SBU IN BRIEF

The Swedish Agency for Health Technology Assessment and Assessment of Social Services (SBU) is a government agency under the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs. SBU is tasked with evaluating scientific support for applied and new methods of healthcare practice and for all activities pursued under the Social Services Act (SFS 2001:453) and the Act concerning Support and Service for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments (SFS 1993:387), from a medical, social, financial, societal, and/or ethical perspective.



SBU's vision and objectives

THE SWEDISH AGENCY for Health Technology Assessment and Assessment of Social Services (SBU) conducts independent scientific assessments of methods and interventions in health-care, social services, and related fields. As the complexity and scale of the challenges facing society increase, so does the need for reliable knowledge, useful innovation, and science-based initiatives, which in turn create a higher demand for SBU's evidence-based reports, method support, and training programmes.

Using methods and interventions that are based on scientific knowledge enables the smarter use of society's resources, giving patients and service users as well as their carers and families access to whatever benefits them most. To ensure that our evidence-based reports are put to practical use, we therefore operate in close dialogue with the recipients and with actors operating in the national knowledge-based management systems.

SBU has drawn up a strategy for 2024–2028 comprising a new vision and five general operational objectives. Our vision – *Improving health and welfare through science-based knowledge* – reflects the part that scientific data plays in the development of society in general, and of health and social care and social services in particular. The strategy, which is based on SBU's governmental directive, guides our work and outlines the approaches by which the vision and our operational objectives can contribute to overcome current societal challenges.

Supported by our strategy, SBU staff and other actors within the knowledge management chain aim to make a vital contribution to an evidence-based and equal healthcare and social services.

Stockholm April 2024

Britta Björkholm
Director-General



SBU's mission

SBU COMPILES SCIENTIFIC research in the fields of healthcare, dentistry, social services, functioning and disability, and how working environment impacts general health. This is achieved in a systematic, transparent, and reproducible manner. We evaluate the effect of various methods and interventions, whether they involve any risks or ethical problems, how they are experienced, and what provides the best cost-benefit ratio. These assessments include an equality perspective, whenever possible.

We identify methods and interventions with poorly understood efficacy and prioritise the evidence gaps that are most in need of filling using applied research. This is achieved by collaborating closely with service professionals, patients and service users as well as their carers and families.

SBU also offers an information service that provides an overview of the current state of research for specific methods and interventions.

SBU's reports are distributed to national, regional, and municipal decision-makers, as well as to other relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, our reports provide other government agencies with source material for generation of guidelines or decision-making documents and can be used as a know-

ledge base for development of government commissions and legislation.

SBU is a national expert authority for the methods used in the production of systematic reviews and HTA¹- and SIA²-reports in the fields of healthcare, social care, and social services. We share our methodological expertise and train researchers, agency officials, operational managers, and professionals who use or generate their own systematic reviews or similar reports.

Internationally, SBU is a well-established, active, and reliable agency for knowledge-based methodological excellence, within both the conventional medical field and the rapidly growing field of social services. Methodologies in financial evaluation and the provision of scientific information are continuously evolving and there is a need for accurate analyses of cost effectiveness and scientific information searches in many sectors of society.

¹ HTA (Health Technology Assessment) is an internationally recognised term denoting the evaluation of methods used in the healthcare sector.

² SIA (Social Intervention Assessment) is a term denoting the evaluation of methods used in the social services sector.

A young child with curly blonde hair is walking on a gravel path in a park. The child is wearing a dark blue long-sleeved shirt with white horizontal stripes and blue jeans. The background is a blurred green landscape with trees and bushes. The text "Our vision" is overlaid in the top right corner in a large, white, sans-serif font.

Our vision

Improving health and
welfare through science-
based knowledge



Objective 1

Our scientific perspective contributes to the development of healthcare and social services

THE SCIENTIFIC SOURCE material produced by SBU are important elements of the ability to maintain and develop evidence-based healthcare and social services. Our work allows the best available knowledge to be balanced with the clinical and practical experience of the service provider and the needs and wishes of the patient or service user. Our reports can also include ethical and economic factors, thus facilitating the choice of intervention when different options are available. When resources are limited, it is important to prioritise methods and interventions that provide optimal value, considering the costs, both from the individual and societal perspective. Our assessments contribute to decision-making on many levels, from the implementation or discontinuation of a certain method or intervention, to personalised service offerings.

Through early dialogue and close collaboration with target groups at a national, regional, and local level, we identify and prioritise questions in need of a scientific evaluation, so that we can produce the required scientific source material. Being attentive to the perspectives and circumstances of the recip-

ient is critical to our ability to search for, review, compile, and present the current state of knowledge. Our work also exposes scientific evidence gaps that preclude reliable assessments of a method's or intervention's effect based on the available research. It is important that such gaps are identified since they show where further research is needed.

We are committed to facilitating the dialogue and collaboration for knowledge and experience exchanges among key actors in Sweden, EU, and around the world.

Objective 1 comprises the following milestone goals:

- ▶ Our scientific source material serves to enhance the knowledge among decision-makers, professionals, patients and service users as well as their carers and families
- ▶ Our reports answer relevant and well-defined questions that are agreed upon with the patients and service users
- ▶ We elevate the profile of SBU within the EU and the rest of the world

Objective 2

Our method is used and recommended by additional relevant stakeholders

SBU OPERATES ON the basis of an internationally accepted method for producing systematic reviews in the fields of healthcare, dentistry, social services, functioning and disability. We also train others how to perform well-conducted systematic reviews and generate HTA/SIA reports. In doing so, SBU contributes to the enhancement of skills within various government agencies, regional HTA units and research and development units. Furthermore, we provide guidance to operational developers in the field of social work, by enabling other national knowledge-based managers to generate guidelines and recommendations of high scientific standard. This is vital for continuous improvement of healthcare and social services.

We guide and train decision-makers, operational managers, and professionals in the practical use of our scientific reports. We also help researchers and research grant providers to improve the quality of clinical and practical research.

Objective 2 comprises the following milestone goals:

- ▶ We participate in national and international methodological development, to ensure that our methods and approaches meet our needs and those of external users
- ▶ We communicate our methods and results on the national and international scenes and train and support other operators



Objective 3

Our work contributes to coordinated and value-generating knowledge management

SBU PLAYS A KEY role in knowledge-driven management within the central government sector. We produce relevant, reliable, and comprehensible evidence-based reports that meet the recipients' needs, irrespective of whether our work is a final product or part of guidelines or recommendations produced by another body. An understanding of the recipients' priority needs and practical circumstances is essential to the successful implementation of new knowledge and to optimising the benefit of training and other knowledge-enhancing initiatives.

Our work helps to ensure that the health of the entire population remains good and equal, that welfare resources are put to effective use, and that society is better prepared to handle current

and future challenges. Guided by our mission, we contribute to coordinated, effective and relevant knowledge-based management in the fields of healthcare, dentistry, and social services. We also deliver important knowledge relating to functioning and disability, together with providing understanding on how working environment impacts general health.

Objective 3 comprises the following milestone goals:

- ▶ Our publications are adjusted to the target population and fulfil the relevant accessibility, language clarity, and format requirements
- ▶ We continuously improve the applicability of methods and results in our publications



Objective 4

We are an attractive employer and learning organisation where everyone takes a holistic responsibility and contributes to a sustainable work environment

THE WORK OF SBU is founded upon our employees and our collective expertise. We all take personal responsibility for the agency's operations, which are characterised by a sound work environment and a spirit of solidarity and trust-based leadership and employee-ship. Doing so allows us to realise SBU's mission and vision together.

We share experiences among ourselves and learn from previous projects, and create conditions in which dialogue, inclusion, and transparency can flourish through effective interaction and well-developed forms of internal communication.

SBU promotes a tolerant culture characterised by curiosity, trust, competence, and the courage to take on new challenges. A strategic approach to skills supply and competence-development is an important part of our growth as a government agency, making SBU an attractive employer. SBU adheres to central government values, which is reflected by our ability to provide good governance.

Objective 4 comprises the following milestone goals:

- ▶ We have the competence that meets our current and future needs
- ▶ We trust in each other's competence and take a personal and holistic responsibility in our work
- ▶ We create conditions that favour continuous learning and development of new approaches
- ▶ We preserve a sustainable work environment, and work methodically with factors promoting health and safety
- ▶ Our internal communication encourages participation, commitment, and a shared view of our common objectives

Objective 5

We are effective and continuously evolve the way we work with our core activities and administration

A SOUND ADMINISTRATIVE culture with an effective management system that operates in compliance with laws, ordinances, and regulations is fundamental to SBU. We work along a structured management, planning, and follow-up process in order to be able to set the right priorities and ensure the optimal use of our resources. We are continuously developing our internal processes to improve our operations and make use of digital tools that support and quality-assure our work.

We regularly monitor trends and adapt our operations to growing demands for digitalisation, data security, and preparedness. Our communication activities have a clear purpose that supports our mission and operations and contributes to knowledge-sharing. We meet the needs of our target groups through the medium of proactive, transparent, and effective communication, and work consistently with digital accessibility.

Objective 5 comprises the following milestone goals:

- ▶ We have a structured process for the planning, prioritising, and monitoring of operations
- ▶ We continuously work on renewing and improving our processes
- ▶ We use digital tools that streamline and quality-assure our work
- ▶ We have a good administrative culture
- ▶ We continuously develop SBU as a communicative organisation