

The “Satsa Friskt” project

SATSA FRISKT

Satsa Friskt was established in 2003 in response to increasing levels of absence due to sickness in society over a period of several years. Work environment surveys conducted at government workplaces had revealed problems relating to everything from shoulder pain, to it being too quiet at work. The government urged the state administration (the 250 central government agencies) to reduce absence due to sickness by half by the year 2008.

The decision to launch Satsa Friskt was made by the Swedish Agency for Government Employers (SAGE) and the union parties within the state sector. The decision was based on a central agreement between the parties for the years 2002–2004. It included an agreement to jointly support efforts to improve the work environment and reduce sickness absence at government workplaces.

Objectives

SATSA FRISKT PROVIDES support for joint development projects within central government administration in the form of financial contributions and expertise. The organisation was funded by the money that was put aside by Statshälsan, the state's former foundation for occupational health services.

SATSA FRISKT'S objectives were to

- support local initiatives aimed at improving the work environment
- reduce sickness absence at government workplaces
- prevent ill-health
- develop local partnerships.

WORK HAS CENTRED around six different focus areas:

- Organisation – leadership – participation
- Human Computer Interaction
- Rehabilitation
- Threats and violence at work
- Fitness activities
- Physical work environment.

Organisation

TODAY SATSA FRISKT is a part of The Central Government Social Partners' Council, (Partsrådet) which is a non-profit association. Its members are SAGE, the Public Employees' Negotiation Council OFR/s, P and O, Saco-s and SEKO which jointly form the Board of the Council. The main task of the Council is to support social partners at agency level in the implementation of core issues from central agreements or joint positions. The work in the council is based on a principle of consensus. Since the mid 1990s the council has successfully worked in a number of development areas including Local development, Work environment, Gender equality, Diversity, Ethics and transparency and Pay formation.

THE COUNCIL IS led by a committee comprising six representatives from the members, three from SAGE, and one from each union organisation. As of 2009, the Social Partners' Council is organised into four areas: Satsa Friskt, Support for local partnerships, Equality at work, and Support for local wage structures. The number of areas and the focus of the work are adjusted following agreement between the parties.

Satsa Friskt's steering group consists of six representatives from the parties in the

The Central Government Social Partners Council; three from SAGE, and one from each of the unions Saco-S, SEKO and OFR/s, O, P. The group makes decisions on new projects, strategic focus and the overall budget. The group also discusses strategies for the dissemination of knowledge and sharing of experiences. The steering group is also here to monitor the interests of its organisations, for example by ensuring that union representatives are involved in the projects, that they participate and that there actually is cooperation between the parties in the projects.

THE PERSON WITH operative responsibility for Satsa Friskt is located at the secretariat, and is responsible for preparing projects and short-term planning, as well as for participating in seminars and visits to public authorities. There are two additional part-time project coordinators at the secretariat, and a project secretary. They have continual contact with the involved agencies, and are responsible for starting up projects, checking, follow-up and evaluation. The secretariat also initiates and organises various communication activities, such as seminars, publications and information on the website.



GÖRAN FÄLT/BANVERKET

The Swedish Rail Administration's project within Satsa friskt consists of broad and long-term efforts to improve the working environment and employee security.

Cooperation on several levels

THE PROJECTS ARE carried out and organised by the partaking central government agencies themselves, while Satsa Friskt offers support in the form of financial contributions, acts as an advisory body in connection with planning and implementation, and organises platforms for sharing experiences, for example seminars, information on the website, and articles.

The local parties themselves establish and quantify detailed goals and aims within the framework of each project. Effects, results and fulfilment of objectives, as well as processes and methods, are followed up at project level during the programme period. The partaking agencies also contribute towards the sharing of experiences and knowledge with the help of seminars and reports, for example. Each agency is responsible for ensuring that an independent evaluation is carried out at local level.

THE PUBLICATION, application and selection process goes something like this: The secretariat has contact with

the central government agencies and submits applications and proposals for project ideas to Satsa Friskt's steering group. The steering group deals with and prepares the proposal to a certain extent, makes a decision on which projects should be granted funds and additional payments, and offers recommendations on various issues. The group is also there to conduct strategic and more comprehensive discussions around the programme, and to continually monitor the focus of its work.

AT SATSA FRISKT, cooperation between the parties occurs on several levels at the same time. While the central parties set up guidelines for the entire venture, the local parties at the partaking agencies meet and supervise the individual projects jointly. Cooperation often extends even below agency management level. Instead there is a continual and increasingly local cooperation at offices, departments or institutions, and it is often here that the project's operative work is carried out.

Broad selection of projects

TO DATE, SOME 160 million kronor has been granted to around 200 subprojects. Satsa Friskt will keep going up until March 2010, and today it is one of four assignments within the Social Partners' Council.

Some fifty government agencies within separate areas have implemented, or are in the process of implementing, various development initiatives. Around 200 projects are currently underway. Some of the general projects function as umbrella organisations including several subprojects.

The projects differ both in terms of their scope, size, content, and how they began. For example, one project came about on the initiative of a union

representative, who had ideas about how to improve employees' physical work environment, both in terms of ergonomics and in order to reduce the risk of serious accidents. The idea was presented to the agency's central work environment committee, which led to a joint application to Satsa Friskt.

SOMETIMES THE SOCIAL Partners' Council or Satsa Friskt has contacted the central government agency and instigated projects. This has happened in projects relating to improving IT developments in order to come up with usable systems for operations and employees. A close partnership has been developed with a leading university within this field.



BJÖRN WÄNHATALO

Nils Eriksson, sociologist at Umeå University, spoke at a seminar in June 2009, where the university revealed its Satsa friskt project. He stressed the importance of analysing employee surveys thoroughly.

Furthermore, a couple of agencies have worked together on common issues such as conflict management, employee relations and leadership. Other authorities have implemented radical changes in connection with major reorganisation, in order to develop new forms and procedures for their health and work environment initiatives. One public authority has placed a strong focus on a specific staff group with documented movement difficulties.

SOME OF THE LARGER central government agencies have developed key ratios in cooperation with employee organisations. Health-related and financial key

ratios can help an agency to identify direct sick pay costs and costs incurred as a result of both short and long-term sick leave. Key ratios are important in providing the right focus for improvements.

Within the field of Threats and Violence, Satsa Friskt has worked with an expert authority and a number of central government agencies where staff have been subjected to various types and levels of harassment. This work has resulted in a unique web portal, which provides help and support both in relation to preventive work and in terms of dealing with incidents.

Emphasis on sharing experiences

SATSA FRISKT PRIORITISES the sharing of experiences at an early stage in the projects rather than when they are coming to an end, as is usually the case. In order to reinforce this strategy, Satsa Friskt has carried out several seminars on the topic of evaluation. Seminars have also been held to discuss the role of the project manager and union party, in order to strengthen the parties and their roles in the projects. Satsa Friskt has also issued a publication featuring case studies and discussions on cooperation between parties.

The results of the projects, and details of the various tools that were used, are

published regularly on www.satsafriskt.nu. A catalogue detailing all the projects has also been produced.

SATSA FRISKT HAS carried out 35 seminars since autumn 2005 in order to share the results of the projects, and the experiences of those involved. These seminars have attracted roughly 1,400 participants from around 40 central government agencies. There has been a considerable amount of interest, and the fact that several employees from agencies outside projects have taken part is proof that our dissemination work has been effective and widespread.

Sweden's EU membership meant changes to Swedish Customs' organisation. A project was started to improve working conditions and facilitate new work processes..



KENNET RUONA

Success factors and conclusions

OVERALL MANAGEMENT of the projects is believed to have worked well. According to an evaluation, participating agencies have perceived Satsa Friskt's organisation as being functional and well-suited to its purpose.

One success factor highlighted by several projects is that there has been a good mix of people on both the central and local steering groups, with representatives from various sections of the organisation. This enables valuable input from all sides, and facilitates endorsement across the entire organisation

EXAMPLES OF SPECIFIC RESULTS:

- New methods and ways of working have been developed and tested.
- New action plans and procedures have been developed concerning health and work environment.
- Increased knowledge, awareness and interest in health and fitness issues among employees.
- Problems relating to work environment and health have been identified.
- Indications of ill-health are picked up on at an earlier stage.

A FEW OF THE KEY SUCCESS FACTORS:

- Commitment and support from programme level.
- Strong support from participating central government agencies.



Three researchers deep in conversation during a seminar on health and leadership, arranged by Växjö University in 2008.

STEFAN BORGJUS

- Focus on sharing experiences throughout the entire process.
- Good contact and dialogue between programme and project level has encouraged both the agencies' development work and the programme's dissemination work.
- The activities have injected a lot of new ideas into the central government administration.
- The focus areas have functioned as a framework and source of inspiration for many of the projects – further development of these has enabled us to avoid some of the pitfalls encountered in the programme.
- It is important that the agency and the people involved are used to working on a project, since it facilitates both the setting up of the project, as well as its endorsement and implementation.



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