



SWEDISH NAO

# The National Board of Trade's (NBoT) work to overcome trade barrier -methods

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# Results of the performance audit

- Does the NBoT
  - collect data about companies' experience of trade barriers efficiently and practicing good economy?
  - Use data on companies' experience of trade barriers to support companies efficiently and practicing good economy?
- Does Government and the NBoT's reporting on the agency's activities in the above respects provide the information requested by Parliament?
- The NBoT
  - Does not systematically monitor data collection and support for companies in order to develop its operations.
  - Analysis and support – appreciated by those who are aware of them – but unknown to a large degree.
- Government and the NBoT
  - Reports do not provide a picture of the productivity, efficiency and quality of operations.
  - Can learn from the EU Commission's reporting to the European Parliament regarding trade matters.

# Reactions of Parliament to the audit

## SNAO recommendations

- Government
  - Representative data from companies
  - Awareness of NBoT
  - Harmonization with EU reporting – common market
  - Reporting to Parliament
- NBoT
  - Representative data from companies
  - Develop data collection
  - Assess and increase awareness
- Parliament was concerned about whether NBoT used government funds in an efficient and effective way
- In a notice Parliament called Government to come back to Parliament with an actionplan and timetable in order to act on the recommendations of the National Audit Office
- Government has decided on actionplan and timetable

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# Description of the methods

- Document studies
  - Government: documentation from annual dialogues with the NBoT
  - NBoT: reports to ministry, internal development and planning
- Interviews and structured written questions to companies
  - Large companies, SMEs: 16 companies
  - Trade organizations and chambers of Trade
- Questions to companies - Company Panel of "Företagarna"
  - 40 000 members – primarily SMEs
  - Panel reaching 3299 companies
  - Analysis of representativity of sample with regards to SME population
- Comparisons
  - Problems common market – reporting and results
  - European Commission reporting to European Parliament

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# Advantages using and combining methods

## SNAO Mandate and mission for PA

- Constitutionally regulated mandate and audit regulated by law
- Independent audit of the Government, agencies and state-owned enterprises and foundations
- To make sure that the State, with regards to the interests of the general public, is getting good results for its efforts

## Some personal reflections

- Gap analysis
  - What is said and what is done
  - Reaching out to company groups not covered by the NBoT
  - Collecting experiences from those not covered by SNAO:s mandat but experience government at work
- Triangulation
- Helpful in dealing with a challenging auditee .....strengthened the audit team's ability to insist with patience and have a constructive dialogue

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# Difficulties

## **SNAO Mandate and mission for PA**

- Constitutionally regulated mandate and audit regulated by law
- Independent audit of the Government, agencies and state-owned enterprises and foundations
- To make sure that the State, with regards to the interests of the general public, is getting good results for its efforts

## **Some personal reflections**

- Sourcing data – more methods require more and different types of data
  - Identifying and reaching out to companies
- Assess data
- Access to expertise needed
  - In order to for example assess data

# Other methods worth considering – personal reflections

Message from cold reviews of our audits – measure effects of implemented activities

- Datadrive
  - Work closer with financial auditors at the National Audit Office auditing the NBoT – identifying financial data of relevance
- Quantification
  - Tradeflows in different industries and even individual companies affected by trade barriers and difficulties

- Causality – impact analysis
  - Trade barriers and difficulties solved and tradeflows
  - Awareness of NBoT – successful/lost exports
  - How much trade is lost in growth and employment due to trade barriers and difficulties? – relationship to growth

## Achieving

- Strengthening links to
  - Three E:s – economy, efficiency, effectiveness
  - Prioritized risks in the strategy of the National Audit Office