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Delimitation of densely populated areas in Sweden. Using registers for creating new geographies

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Abstract

Statistics Sweden has developed a new method for delimitating densely populated areas, also called localities or urban areas. Objects from geocoded registers are buffered, clustered and combined to catch the different complexities that densely built up areas consist of. The result is almost 2 000 densely populated areas in Sweden. The smallest ones have only 200 inhabitants, while the largest one is the capital Stockholm, with a registered population of 1.5 million people. Thus, a variety of different types of built up areas have to be considered in the method. Not only by size, but also by regional differences within Sweden.

The areas are used for creating official statistics on population, buildings, employment etc. The areas are also used for a variety of purposes outside of the statistical institute. Therefore, they are now available as open data, in GIS formats. They are also displayed at a new interactive map service, which shows the most common regional divisions in Sweden.