

Business Case for Ethical Leadership in the area of culture evolution – Implementing Statist(eth)ics Management in the NSOs

This business case was prepared by the Task Team on Ethical Leadership within the Capabilities and Communication Group (CapComm) and is submitted to the HLG-MOS for their approval.

Type of Activity			
<input type="checkbox"/>	New activity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Extension of existing activity
Proposed Modernisation Group(s) for Activity			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Applying Data Science and Modern Methods	<input type="checkbox"/>	Blue Skies Thinking
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Capabilities and Communication	<input type="checkbox"/>	Supporting Standards
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Other:</i>	<i>Name of proposed group or unknown if not clear</i>	
Purpose			
<p>The activity is based on the key principle that organisations are made up of people and that people express themselves through behaviours when working to achieve the organisation's results. The closer the leaders' behaviour is to the ethical principles adopted by the organisation, the more solid the model will be to reach the pre-established performance.</p> <p>Moreover, ethics management is closely related to sharing of objectives and strengthening of the sense of belonging, since employees feel more involved in those organisations where leaders guide people by example (that is, where leaders first do what is ethically expected from staff); in that case, all personnel and all partners would understand that the organisation is serious about promoting ethical behaviour and is committed to deter, prevent and detect fraud, both in organizational and production practices.</p> <p>Indeed, the Task Team understands that such unethical behaviours can concern both statistical production activities and research (data ethics) as well as supporting activities (business ethics). Therefore, the TT has intended to implement both work streams, “business ethics” and “data ethics”.</p> <p>Business ethics</p> <p>In order to gather relevant information about the ethics management policies adopted by a great number of UNECE’s NSOs, which could represent a benchmark for other NSOs too, three subsequent surveys have been delivered.</p> <p>At first, interest and expectations from NSOs about ethics management as a tool to improve both work environment and overall performance have been collected; then, the later surveys have made it possible to gather a large amount of information now available in order to set shared ethics management policies among the NSOs. Further, such information can be useful to face situations that lead to unethical behaviours if not handled in time.</p> <p>Data Ethics</p> <p>In 2022 Stats Canada and the UK Statistics Authority led a deep dive review into the data ethics practices in National Statistical Organisations (NSO). As part of this the UK, Canada, Albania and Hungary as well as Eurostat and the International Statistical Institute were consulted. The reviewed discussed the definition of data ethics and how it is related to other aspects of ethics, presented the state of practice and development of data ethics in a number of countries and explored the issues</p>			

and challenges related to data ethics. The report made recommendations about how to improve data ethics standards internationally and improve collaboration between NSOs to help the international statistical community to speak about data ethics with a more united voice. The UK Statistics Authority and Statistics Canada presented this paper to the CES Bureau at their October meeting where the paper was discussed, and the conclusions and recommendations were supported.

Description of the activity and deliverable(s)

In 2023, the Task Team actions and deliverables are intended to be as follows:

- **As regards the activities on “Business Ethics”**
 - Analysis of the information collected about the ethics management practices fully implemented or under implementation among the NSOs, in order to share useful suggestions with those NSOs that want to develop similar practices;
 - Set up of a common glossary on ethics and ethical leadership while also taking into account any differences in context;
 - To define ethics within the different areas of GAMS0 as an essential tool to expressly introduce ethics within the statistical production phases described in GSBPM;
 - Drafting of a sort of Handbook including examples of actual situations that can envisage prospective “ethical dilemmas”; such a document, which is not meant to be a regulation at all, might still be a valid term of reference;
 - To facilitate information exchange also through collaborative platforms on ethics subjects (a possible further milestone);
- **As regards the activities on “Data Ethics”**
 - The group on data ethics plan to build upon this work by playing a lead role in organising a data ethics seminar at the next CES plenary session on social acceptability. This will serve as the platform for discussing the in-depth review with a wider audience. The seminar will particularly focus on sharing examples of ethical good practice, ethical issues in statistics and discuss how to position data ethics versus other existing frameworks (e.g. core values, code of practice etc.).
 - The group also plan to produce an international data ethics reference guide providing a common high level data ethics framework for statistics. The reference guide will also provide guidance on how to implement this across the statistical production chain, and how to communicate the benefits of practicing good data ethics to a wide variety of stakeholders (e.g. data suppliers, the public, researchers and civil society).

Alternatives considered

Actually, to stop the Task Team activities at this stage would result in disappointing the expectations of the many NSOs that have been cooperating so far through providing plenty of information, while hoping in turn to receive suggestions for managing ethics in a fruitful way.

Likewise, all the research and analysis actions carried out so far would be made unprofitable, with the risk that the information collected become lost or out-of-date.

How does it relate to the HLG-MOS vision and other activities under the Group or HLG-MOS?

All the actions proposed will represent an extension of the work carried out by the TT in the last two years as in-depth studies following the *Risk Management Framework* and related *Guidelines*. These latter were released by the Modernisation Committee on Organisational Framework and Evaluation (MCOFE) under the coordination of the UNECE HLG-MOS in 2017, and are available at the following web address:

<https://statswiki.unece.org/display/GORM/Guidelines+on+Risk+Management>.

The TT believes that the work done so far would fit well with the efforts to integrate GAMS0 and GSBPM models; actually, among the TT goals there is also the attempt to make ethics management one of the pillars to establish both the organisation and the statistical production development on, thanks to the drafting of specific statements into the standards adopted by the UNECE's MOS.

Proposed start and end dates

Start: January 2023

End: December 2023 (to be extended if considered appropriate)