

UNECE'S Task Team on Ethics

REPORT

Main survey on Ethics management:

First analysis of the results about the linkage between Ethics and Organization

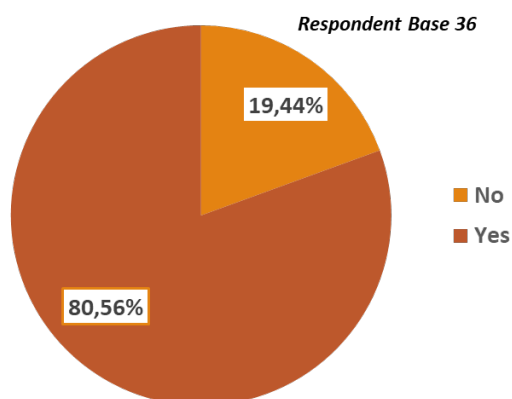
Summary

Foreword.....	2
1. Policies and Organisational models for Ethics Management.....	4
2. Strategies and practices of Ethics Management.....	6
3. Training on Ethics	8
4. Output & outcome of the UNECE's task team project on Ethics Management	9

Foreword

Early in 2021 the Task Team on Ethical Leadership under the CapComm Group delivered a preliminary poll to understand the possible presence of ethics management policies among NSOs.

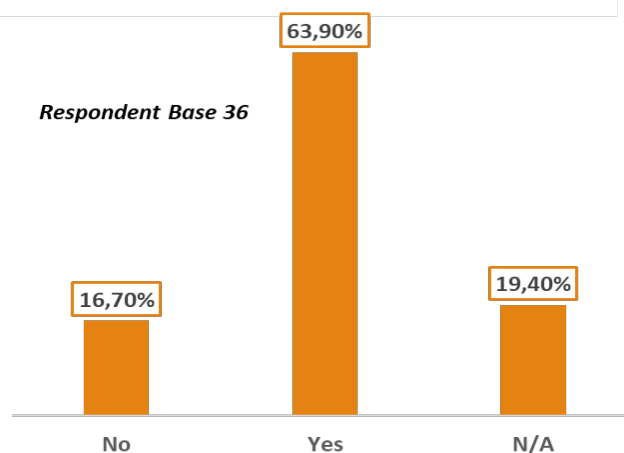
Are there any Ethics/Ethical management policies/practices in your Organisation?



About half of surveyed NSOs has responded to the poll; the results have shown that about 80% of them have been implementing some sort of ethics management (for more than 3 years in 24 cases) by setting up programmes, procedures and training.

Almost 2/3 of all respondents have reported their interest in participating to a further, in-depth survey.

Would you (your Organisation) be interested in being involved in a survey on Ethics/Ethical management?



Therefore, starting from these encouraging findings, the Task Team has prepared a second survey in order to learn more about the development level of ethics management among NSOs; in July and August the survey was delivered to collect as much information as possible about the existence of common practices on ethics management with respect to both statistical production and organisational processes. 46 out of 65 NSOs responded to the survey.

The ISTAT sub-team has analysed the many responses to trace possible connections between ethics management and organisational improvement; in particular, the sub-team aims to verify, through the experience shared by the respondents, whether an appropriate level of ethics management can also contribute to an overall increase in performance.

Actually, since the survey was just aimed to find out any existence of ethics management practices, its results can just give an overall picture of the different ways to manage ethics among the NSOs surveyed. To this purpose, the task team agreed on analysing two different areas of ethics management, that is, with respect to statistical data collection and production (so called “data ethics”) under the coordination of StatCan, and with respect to organisational improvement under the coordination of Istat.

As far as organisational improvement is concerned, three main topics have been considered:

- **Ethics policies and organizational frameworks**
- **Ethics strategies and practices**
- **Training on Ethics**

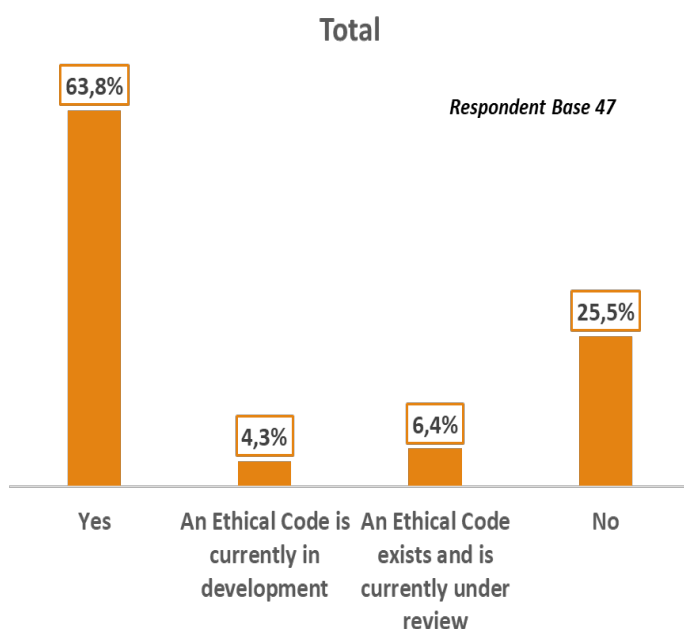
Here follow a representation of responses highlighting their main connections with reference to ethics management for organisational improvement.

1. Policies and Organisational models for Ethics Management

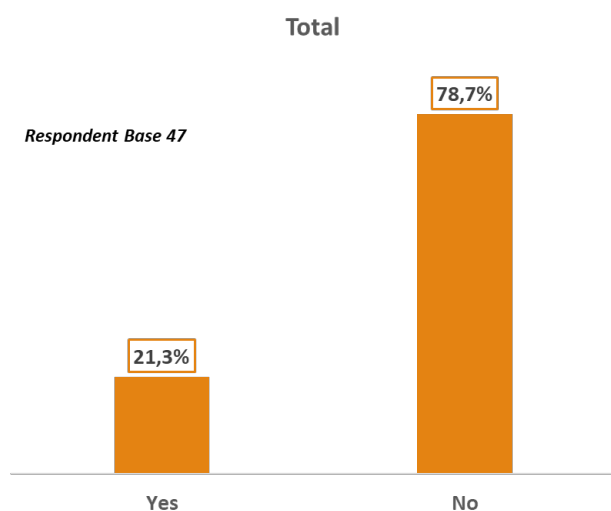
Q6. Does your NSO have an 'Ethical Code' or a document regarding the expected ethical behavior of its employees?

About 70% of respondents have reported that their NSOs have their own Codes of conduct, currently under revision in some cases. If we add the NSOs in which the Code is under construction, we reach almost 75%. A Code of Conduct represents the main tool to establish ethics management policies.

Therefore, it can be interesting to compare the survey results with the actual implementation of this tool, which comes from a process aimed to detect any recurring circumstances that could negatively influence right behaviours at work, especially when the rules are not that clear: in this case we talk about "Ethical dilemmas".

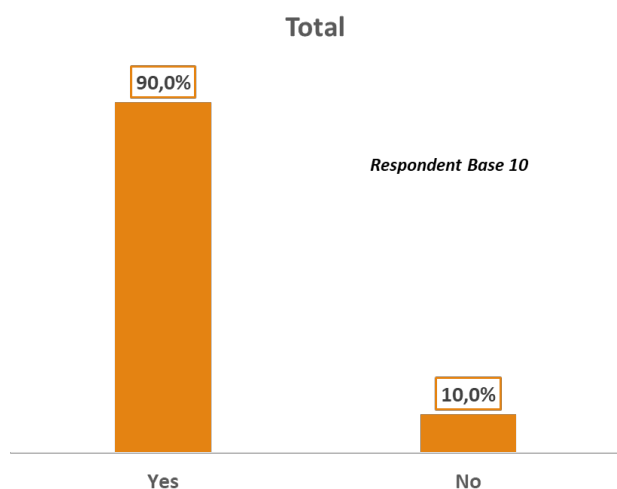


Q7. Is your organisation facing particular Ethical dilemmas where a breach investigation process may be required to deal with, for example, conflict of interest?



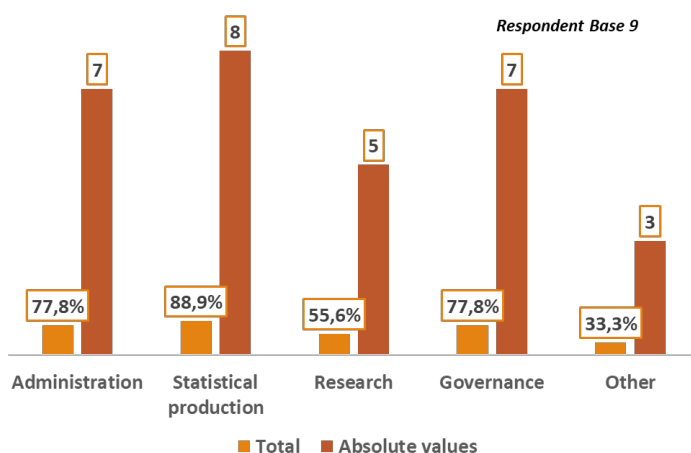
Almost 80% of respondents have reported that their NSOs lack ethics criticalities – such as conflict of interests, etc. – that need to be confronted through investigation and proper actions. Further information is clearly required to understand whether this “lack” depends on very effective ethics management policies or, instead, on little knowledge about “ethical dilemmas” when applied to NSOs.

Q9. Does your organization have a process to investigate a breach of professional ethics or scientific integrity? (Question filtered by Q7)



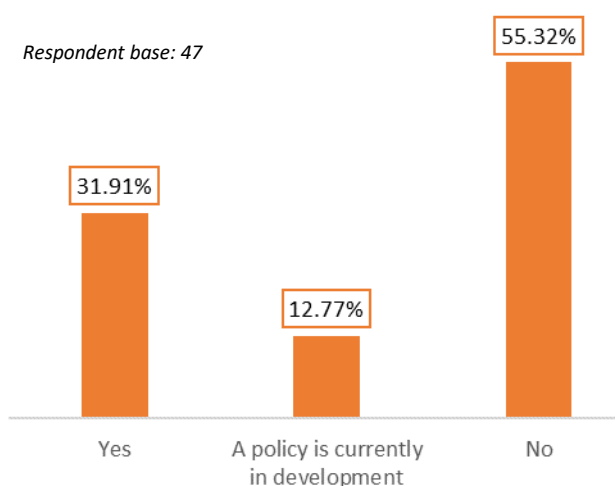
Considering the 10 NSOs that have reported “ethical dilemmas” with respect to their working activities, almost all of them have also reported practices of detection and analysis in case of a breach as routine professional ethics management.

Q10. This process covers which areas? (Question filtered by Q9)



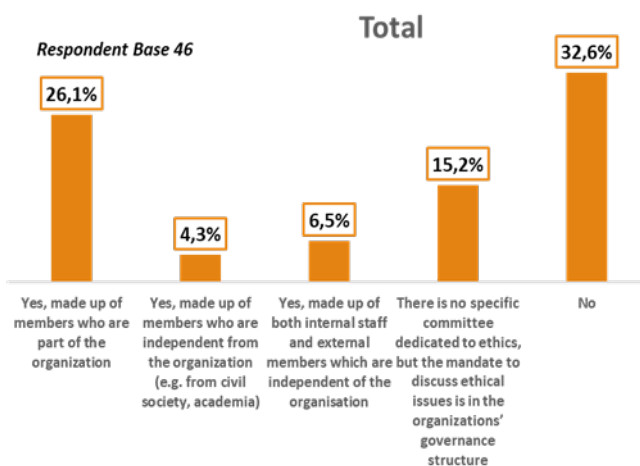
Considering the 9 NSOs that have reported policies on ethical breach management, such policies especially concern the areas of statistical production, administration and governance.

Q12. Does your NSO have a Data Ethics Policy of Framework in place?



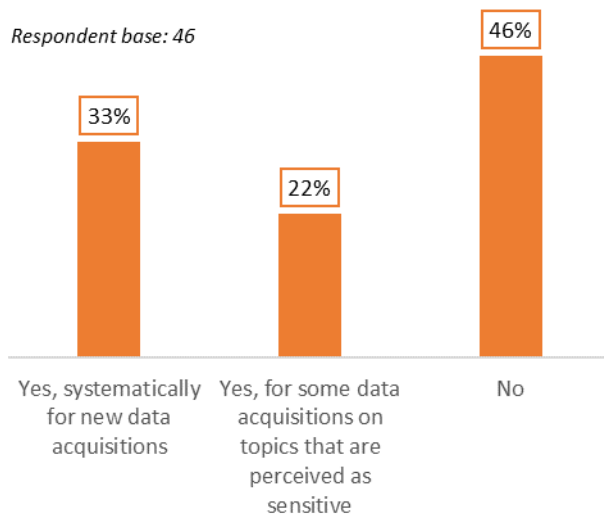
A little less than half respondent NSOs have declared having a Data Ethics Policy or Framework in place or in development. No distinction is made “traditional” statistics and modern methods, such as artificial intelligence (AI) or machine learning (ML), as no NSO has responded having a Data Ethics Policy only for AI or ML projects.

Q13. Does your NSO have an Ethics Committee?



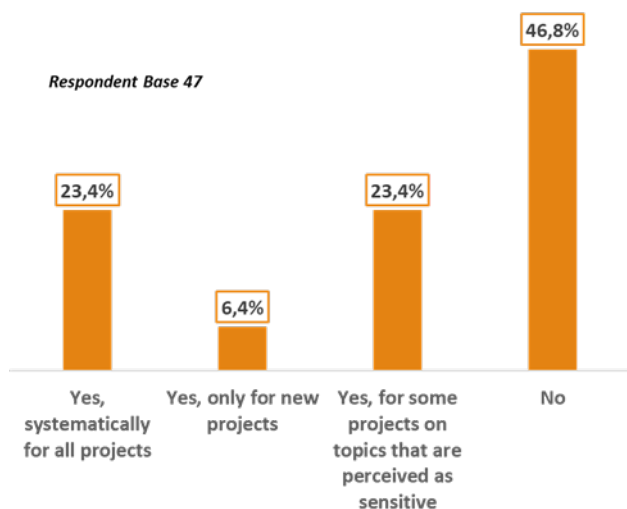
With reference to the choice of an organisational entity for ethics management, about 50% of respondents have reported a specific Committee or other body; the presence of such entities is not always connected to the adoption of a Code of conduct.

Q14. Are Ethical Reviews conducted on data acquisitions by your organization?



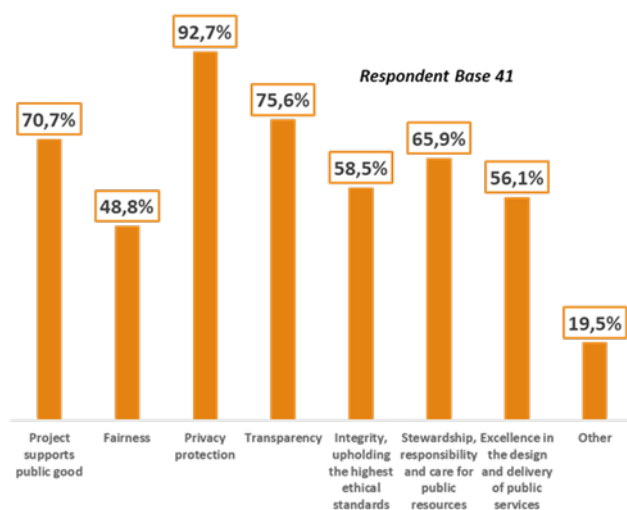
A third of respondent NSOs have reported conducting ethical reviews systematically for all new data acquisitions. The proportion increases to 55% when adding NSOs conducting ethical reviews when acquiring data on sensitive topics.

Q15. Are Ethical Reviews conducted on projects by your organization?



According to over half of respondents, their NSOs' in-house projects undergo ethical reviews; within 11 NSOs (about 23%) such reviews occur regularly.

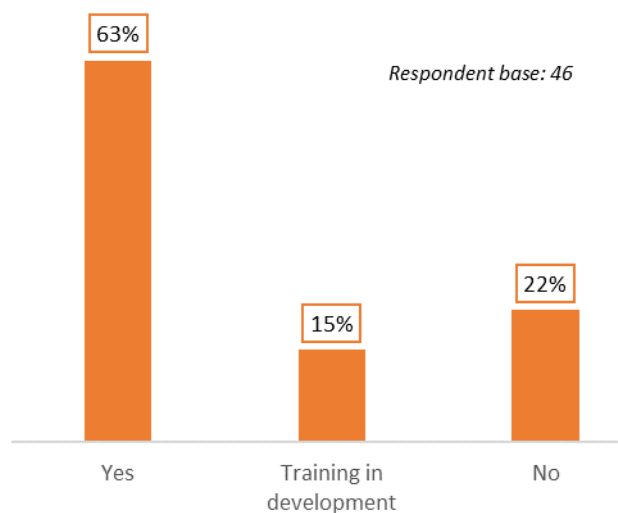
Q16. What are your NSO's guiding values to determine whether a project or data acquisition should go ahead or not based on ethical considerations?



Personal data protection, transparency and public good supporting have been reported as the main values to be considered before deciding whether to start a project or data acquisition or not. Integrity and upholding the highest ethical standards have been included among such main values by 24 NSOs (58,5% of respondents).

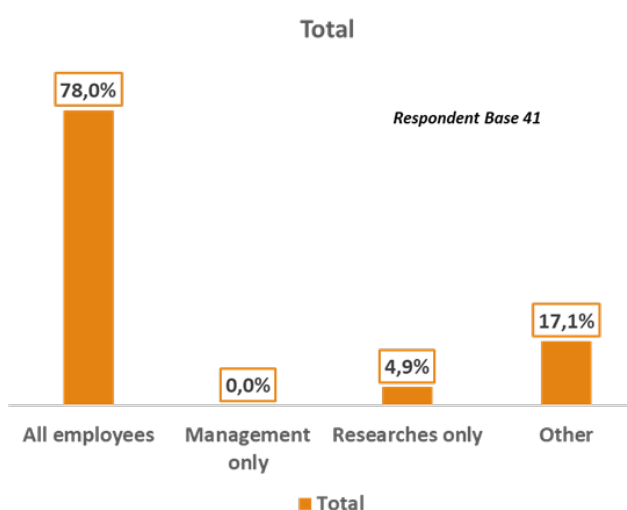
3. Training on Ethics

Q17. Does your organization provide employees with training on Data Ethics or Ethical Behavior?



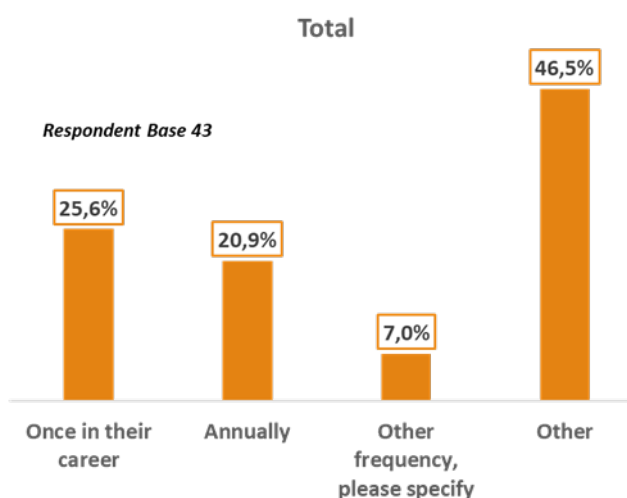
Nearly two thirds of respondents are providing training on Data Ethics or Ethical Behavior. The proportion increases to nearly 80% when adding NSOs with training in development. The following questions provide some details on the training offered.

Q18. Who is the target audience of your organization's training on Ethics?



Setting up of targeted training on ethics management contributes to increase awareness about the relevance of ethics at work. About 80% of respondents have reported specific training courses on ethics addressed to all staff, thereby giving evidence of the attention on this issue by many NSOs.

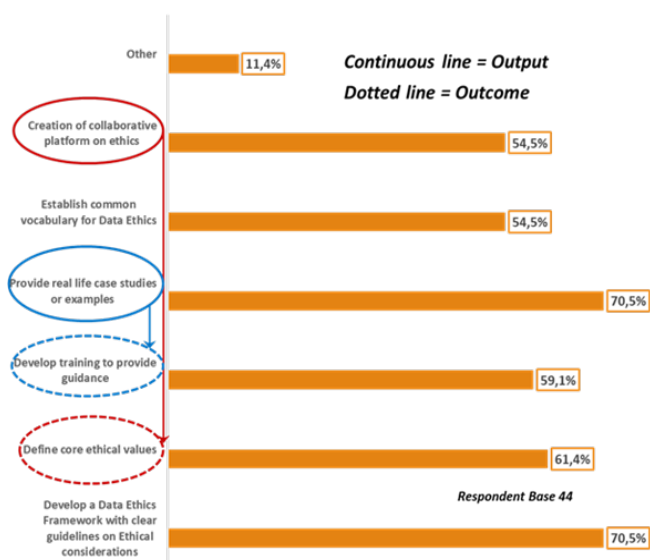
Q19. How frequently are your organization's employees required to take training on Ethics?



However, in most cases such training is not delivered regularly; the courses are mostly addressed to new recruits or to staff involved in new projects. 11 NSOs even deliver training on ethics once in a working life.

4. Output & outcome of the UNECE's task team project on Ethics Management

Q21. What are the expectations of your NSO towards the UNECE Task Team on Ethics in terms of concrete guidance on the topic of Ethics?



As regards main expectations from the respondents about this project, we can highlight two important trends. The first one primarily points to strategy through the creation of a collaborative platform to share experience on ethics management among the NSOs; the second one is more practical and points to defining and sharing case studies in order to develop a targeted training on the principles and tools of ethics management.