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

This business case was prepared by the Modernisation Group on Capabilities and Communication and is submitted to the HLG-MOS for its approval as an extension of the activity started in 2021.

Type of Activity			
☐	New project	☐	New activity
☐	Extension of existing project	☒	Extension of existing activity
		This activity was started in 2021 as further study following the release of the *Guidelines on Risk Management* in 2017 and aiming to focus on ethics management as a key to improve performance and organization wellbeing. In 2021 tangible results have been achieved to start defining practices for managing ethics and integrity among UNECE member Countries.	

Purpose

The Task Team on ethical leadership started its activity in 2021 as further study from the *Risk Management Framework* and related *Guidelines*, released in 2017 by the Modernisation Committee on Organisational Framework and Evaluation (MCOFE), under the coordination of the UNECE HLG-MOS.

The activity is based on the key principle that organisations are made up of people and that people express themselves through behaviours when work 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. Employees feel more involved in the organisations where leaders guide people **by example**; under this circumstance, all personnel and all partners could 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.

The multiplication of data sources available and the development of techniques and technology to make better use of them, have highlighted the importance of data ethics. Data ethics is field of study that addresses questions about the appropriate use of data. It raises different questions and problems to solve at various stages of the life cycle of data. Possible ethical issues related with the use of data include, among others, using biased data to inform decision makers, using data that can reinforce existing inequalities and privacy intrusion that is not proportional to the benefit of a project.

Therefore, ethics management can represent a valuable tool to facilitate people in proactively behaving in order to achieve expected results, because a work environment that is very careful about ethical behaviours generates a better sense of belonging in comparison with a work environment in which arbitrary decisions and lack of interest in community prevail. On the other hand, statistical production and research also need strong attention with reference to ethics in all production phases, from data collection to dissemination and interpretation.

Description of the activity

In 2021 the Task Team, currently under the coordination of Istat e Statistics Canada, has delivered a preliminary poll to investigate how many NSOs have been implementing policies, procedures and programmes on ethics management. The poll was also intended to investigate which NSOs were interested to be informed about successful ethics management practices from the NSOs that developed or are developing them.

Given the good results of the preliminary poll (more than half of the recipients have responded to the poll) a main survey was prepared to go deeper with analysis on the ways to implement ethics management, from drafting Codes of conduct to setting up an Ethics Committee, from establishing strategic goals to training on ethics.

To this purpose, the in-depth analysis has covered two particular fields in applied ethics that were highlighted by the results of the preliminary poll: ethics management to improve performance and organisation in general and ethics management of statistical production and dissemination processes (data ethics). Consequently, the Task Team split in two cooperating sub-teams under the coordination of Istat for ethics management and performance, and Statistics Canada for data ethics.

The main survey has been particularly successful: about 70% of the recipients have responded to the survey, also extensively in many cases.

The survey results will be presented during the HLG-MOS Workshop in November; a very first analysis highlights a widespread ethics management, that is, we can't find just one or two Countries that are best in managing all the ethics items together; instead, a lot of Countries excel in implementing ethics through specific items: strategies, processes, organisation, training, etc.

The survey results also show relevant expectations concerning future development of this activity as well as future cooperation and information exchange among respondent Countries: setting up of a strategic framework, presentation of case studies, collaboration platform and training programmes.

Therefore, the final goal of the activity is to define a common vocabulary, a framework, and give concrete suggestions (a sort of Handbook) to support NSOs' leadership in **real-work-type**; in a few words, how to deal with potential behavioural dilemmas (for example, in terms of data processing, personal data protection, conflict of interests and so on).

We also propose to organize a meeting (for example, during next HRMT workshop) to share information, experience and good practices.

The closing step could be to suggest possible changes in "Strategy and Leadership" activity area of the Generic Activity Model for Statistical Organisations (GAMSO), in order to align the model with the new framework.

Alternatives considered

As far as we know, there are no similar activities organised by other public international organisations on this specific theme.

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

This continued activity proposal is aligning directly with HLG-MOS vision within agile and adaptive culture and also with priority topics on setting the visions and **culture evolution**.

Proposed start and end dates

Start: January 2022	**End:** December 2022