



# Statistics Netherlands Ethics Committee

## Purpose, composition and methods

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# Purpose

- Ethics Committee advises on the ethical aspects of new requests for statistical research;
- Perspective of data ethics: should we perform every research that is legally and methodologically feasible?;
- The Statistics Netherlands Ethics Committee is anchored in the exploratory phase of new research;
- Ethics Committee advises senior management including the director-general of Statistics Netherlands.

# Assessment framework – (1) Reliability

- The statistics to be made public by the government are accurate, complete, reliable and technically and socially explainable;
- Without revealing;
- Without the results having a stigmatizing effect on a specific group;
- Without the results having undesirable consequences for a specific group;
- Without the subject or the questioner being too controversial in combination with the goal.



## Assessment framework – (2) Objectivity

- Statistics Netherlands is independent and determines when and how it publishes which statistical information;
- Statistics Netherlands publishes objective statistical information of high quality, which is also user-friendly;
- The statistical information must have an authoritative and undisputed reputation.

## Assessment framework – (3) Society-oriented

- Statistical information is provided by government that meets the needs of practice, policy and science.

# Composition

- Internal committee with a permanent composition from different perspectives: senior researcher as well as professor on social and demographic developments, director of economic statistics, directors/managers of policy-making, legislation, methodology and communication;
- The right people are immediately involved to provide advice on research projects where ethical questions occur;
- External experts are invited in complicated cases and for reflection.



# Current way of working

- Demand-driven and provides advice to the management involved;
- Committee-meeting every two weeks: ethical cases are discussed with the submitter and the committee provides advice;
- Working method is based on the so-called PJD-decision model (perception, judgment, decision-making);
- Management decides whether or not to follow the advice. In the event of deviation from the advice, a manager must consult the director-general of Statistics Netherlands for taking a decision.





# Case examples

- Curfew riots during Covid;
- Suicide among farmers;
- Violence by police officers;
- Incidents involving people with confused behavior;
- Property owners in case of illegal property use;
- Asylum children with youth care;
- Study progress and cultural diversity.



# Questions

- How do we ensure that we are sufficiently equipped to provide advice on complex AI-issues?
- Right now we are anchored in the exploratory phase of request for statistical research. In which parts of the organisation should we also be embedded in the future: new datasources, innovative methods,..? And how?





**Facts that matter**