

Checklist for dealing with cases

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Introduction

The work of the Ethics Board is based on its Charter and regulations. The decisions of the Board are politically impartial and made to the best of its knowledge and belief. When considering a case, the Ethics Board goes through the five stages described below.

Before looking into a case, the Board must satisfy itself that the minimum requirements for pursuing a submission are met, or establish how they might be met. The Ethics Board moves through 5 phases in dealing with a case: the preliminary analysis, main examination, overall assessment, disclosure of the verdict and recommendation, and finally, follow-up. These phases are explained below.

Preliminary analysis

A preliminary analysis establishes whether the case lies within the Board's realm of responsibility. The following activities are part of this analysis:

No.	Activity	Explanation
1.1	Analyse the submission	To help plan how to proceed with the case.
1.2	Verify the submission	Check whether and how the circumstances described in the submission violates the principles of the Charta.
1.3	Evaluate the need for external consultants	Check whether an external consultant should be involved in dealing with the submission. → Estimate what resources will be needed
1.4	Check whether there are already project(s) underway.	Is there already a project (or projects) underway to revise the statistics upon which the submission is based, and should this be taken into account?
1.5	Check for precedents	Is there a precedent that relates to the case?
1.6	Procedure in the event of a rejection	If a submission is rejected, the case and the grounds for rejection are documented. The applicant is informed in an appropriate form.

Processing

When processing a submission, all the information relevant to the overall assessment must be written up and discussed. The following activities are part of this assessment:

No.	Activity	Explanation
2.1	Draw up an internal fact sheet	This documents problems and questions of a statistical nature.
2.2	Identify the legal principles involved	There must be a legal basis for any collection of data.
2.3	Sources and data	Whether there is a metadatabase containing information on sources, microdata or macrodata, tables, diagrams, collection methods (register data, representative or full coverage survey, direct or indirect sampling, use of administrative data) and analyses.
2.4	What principles of the Charta or the European Statistics Code of Practice have been violated?	The reasons why the principles of the Charta and the European Statistics Code of Practice have been violated.

2.5	Are there other ethical principles that the Ethics Board considers relevant?	In order to better understand the relationships between the ethical principles applicable to public statistics and other ethical principals.
2.6	Establish the boundaries of the consultation process	Decide upon who will be involved, plan its implementation, carry it out and evaluate the answers.

Overall assessment by the Ethics Board

The edited information and the results of the administrative consultative procedure are combined into a single document, discussed with the members and clarified accordingly. It is particularly important that the limits of the case, the public nature of the statistics under examination, the questions asked and the reasons for the decision are coherently explained. The following activities make up the overall assessment:

No.	Activity	Explanation
3.1	Description of the context	A coherent explanation of the issue.
3.2	Description of the problems and answers	A documentary record of the problems and the answers of the Ethics Board to the applicant's questions.
3.3	Clarification of the recommendation	Clarification and approval of recommendation
3.4	Translation of the recommendation	Prior to translation, the German or French version of the recommendation must receive final approval.

Disclosure of the verdict and recommendation

This includes an evaluation of the possible communication channels through which the recommendation might be communicated. The following activities are part of the disclosure process:

No.	Activity	Explanation
4.1	Internal (not public) circulation of the recommendation	The form of publication is at the discretion of the Ethics Board.
4.2	Publishing	

Follow-up

The secretariat maintains a [list](#) of the cases dealt with or petitioned.