

THE LABEL COMMITTEE

A GOVERNING BODY ENSURING THE QUALITY OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS

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The Official Statistics Label Committee was set up in 1994 to certify the quality of statistical surveys. Since the 2010s, its missions have extended, as the amendment of the 1951 Statistical Act laid down a broader definition of “official statistics”. The Committee continues to assess the quality of surveys after the opportunity statement delivered by the National Council for Statistical Information; it delivers a “conformity” statement, leading to the definition of the program of surveys with a ministerial visa. The Committee now also intervenes at the request of the Official Statistics Authority, in the process of labelling administrative statistics produced by bodies entrusted with a public service mission but being outside the Official Statistical Service.

The Committee has built up a method and a body of rules for examining the cases submitted to its examination. Starting from considerations expressed in terms of burden or proportionality of the collection to the objectives pursued, the Committee has extended its rules to cover all dimensions of statistical quality, as formalised in the European Statistics Code of Practice. For the Official Statistical Service, the Label Committee thus constitutes a lever for ensuring compliance with the principles of the Code, such as large consultation, methodological quality, proportionate burden, dissemination of databases and availability of metadata.

■ ■ Le Comité du label a été créé en 1994 pour attester de la qualité des enquêtes de la statistique publique. Depuis les années deux-mille-dix, son positionnement et ses missions ont évolué, la modification de la loi de 1951 ayant posé une définition élargie des « statistiques publiques ». Le Comité reste sollicité pour instruire « en conformité » les enquêtes ayant reçu un avis d'opportunité du Conseil national de l'information statistique, définissant le programme des enquêtes ayant le visa ministériel. Il intervient désormais aussi à la demande de l'Autorité de la statistique publique, lors de la labellisation de statistiques administratives, produites par des organismes chargés d'une mission de service public ne faisant pas partie du Service statistique public (SSP).

Le Comité a construit au fil du temps une méthode et une jurisprudence pour examiner les dossiers qui lui sont soumis. Partant de considérations exprimées en termes de charge ou de proportionnalité de la collecte aux objectifs poursuivis, le Comité a élargi ses règles d'examen pour couvrir l'ensemble des dimensions de la qualité statistique, telles que formalisées dans le Code de bonnes pratiques de la statistique européenne. Pour le SSP, le Comité du label constitue ainsi un levier pour s'assurer du respect de ces principes, que ce soit en termes de concertation, de qualité méthodologique, de charge proportionnée, de diffusion ou de mise à disposition des sources statistiques dûment documentées.

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Since its creation within the National Council for Statistical Information (CNIS) in 1994, the Label Committee has played a crucial role in defining the program of official statistical surveys in France. Far from being a simple rubber stamp for survey projects, the Committee certifies their compliance with state of the art standards for implementing surveys and also suggests ways in which they can be improved. Given its transversal coverage, the Committee also plays a pedagogical and advisory role, thus contributing to the dissemination of good practices and to the documentation of surveys and statistics, as well as issuing warnings when necessary.

During the 2010s, the scope of the Label Committee has been broadened: labelling now also applies to statistics resulting from the use of administrative data, when they are produced by public or private bodies entrusted with public service missions. The Committee performs this function on behalf of the Official Statistics Authority (ASP)¹, which issues official statements on quality, following the principles of the European Statistics Code of Practice (CoP). The extension of the role of the Committee led to change its initial name, being now the **Official Statistics Quality Label Committee**² to mark its enlarged missions.

Since its creation, the Label Committee has developed a global approach contributing to the quality of statistical operations. It has therefore supported and contributed to highlight concerns regarding statistical quality in parallel with the dynamic initiated at the European level and has gradually set up a framework to assess them.

FROM THE LABEL COMMITTEE WITHIN THE CNIS...

The Committee was created in 1994 at the request of the National Council for Statistical Information (CNIS), under the name of the **Statistical Surveys Quality Label Committee for Public Services**. Positioned within the CNIS, its purpose was *"to examine the compliance of statistical surveys projects to quality standards, after these projects have been deemed relevant by the Council, and to deliver a general interest label; to propose to the competent ministers the visa for including the survey in the official surveys program referred to in the Statistical Act of 1951 (article 2)"*³.

The aim was to improve the procedures for preparing official statistical surveys (Allain, 1995). The analysis that led to this initiative showed that the CNIS examination needed to be consolidated, as it was no longer adequately meeting certain requirements that were becoming increasingly important. In the case of companies, particularly the smallest among them, there was a need to make them accept the burden of answering statistical surveys, to distinguish statistical surveys from administrative formalities and to demonstrate their purpose and usefulness. For households, it was a case of safeguarding against reactions from respondents or complaints to the CNIL⁴ in connection with the volume and nature of potentially intrusive questions being asked in the survey.

1. See the article by Dominique Bureau on "Ensuring Independent Quality Statistics. The French Official Statistics Authority Ten Years After" in this issue.

2. For ease of reading, the official name will be replaced with Label Committee or even just Committee in the remainder of this article.

3. See also (Isnard, 2018) for the definition of official statistics.

4. French Data Protection Authority (*Commission nationale Informatique et libertés* – CNIL).

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The Label Committee was thus created within the CNIS for an initial experimental period of two years, before being made permanent. The experimentation phase led to define the initial rules for this examination of compliance using a heuristic approach, considering: compliance with existing nomenclatures, consistency of statistical

units, taking account of the need to limit the burden on respondents in the sampling frame, justification of the intrusive nature of certain questions in relation to the objectives being pursued, dissemination of micro-data respecting confidentiality issues.

1 ...TO THE OFFICIAL STATISTICS QUALITY LABEL COMMITTEE —

The French Economic Modernisation Act of 4 August 2008, which led to the creation of the Official Statistics Authority (ASP), applied a broad definition of official statistics, enshrined in the Founding Act No 51-711 of 7 June 1951 on Legal Obligation, Coordination and Confidentiality in statistical matters. The definition of official statistics (Article 2 of the Act) includes “all output resulting from:

- 1 statistical surveys, the list of which is determined each year by a decree by the Minister for the Economy;
- 1 the use of administrative data collected by administrative departments and public or private bodies entrusted with public interest missions, when these data are disseminated in the purpose of public information.

The design, production and dissemination of official statistics shall be carried out in complete professional independence”.

The scope of the statistics disseminated by public operators” has thus been added to the scope of the surveys included in the annual programme (thus having the ministerial visa). The ASP is responsible for labelling statistics disseminated by public operators produced on the basis of administrative data⁵. The authority relies on an expertise of the case led by the Label Committee, named since 2013 as the **Official Statistics Quality Label Committee**.

The Committee is thus in charge of three kinds of missions (Christine, 2016) (**Box 1**), since the two following missions have been added to its traditional mission of examining the compliance of official statistics surveys:

- 1 a mission on behalf of the ASP concerning the scope of public or private operators entitled with public interest missions, when they disseminate information in the purpose of providing general information;
- 1 a mission on behalf of the CNIS to judge the quality of statistics produced by private organisations. This “calibration” procedure follows the proposals set out in a 2010 CNIS report on housing statistics (Vorms, Jacquot and Lhéritier, 2010). Unlike the ASP’s labelling activities, private organisations can apply to this procedure on a voluntary basis, as there is no legal basis for the dissemination of statistics produced by private organisations that do not fulfil public service roles.

5. Produced, for example, by the Central Agency for Social Security Bodies (ACOSS), the French governmental employment centre (*Pôle Emploi*), the National Family Allowance Fund (CNAF), the Public Pensions Service (SRE), the Centre for Epidemiology on the Medical Causes of Death (CépiDC), the Chamber of Notaries or the French Road Safety Observatory (ONISR).

With this extension of its competences, the Label Committee became a separate entity in 2013. Its resources are provided by INSEE within the Methodology, Statistical Coordination and International Relations Directorate (DMCSI), consisting of a rapporteur and a general secretariat, as well as experts to examine the cases. The surveys and administrative statistics are examined by thematic committees, the composition of which is determined by a decree, under the responsibility of the Chair of the Committee, appointed by the Minister of the Economy after having consulted the Presidents of the ASP and the CNIS⁶).

📊 AN OFFICIAL STATISTICS SURVEY STATUS THAT PROVIDES GUARANTEES

The official statistics survey status implies duties for the statistical services (they have to fulfil the procedures implemented by the CNIS and the Label Committee, which requires the submission of standardised documents), but it also confers rights for the services and provides guarantees for respondents.



The services implementing surveys are therefore able to highlight the “official statistics” brand and the general interest criterion, to ensure that the communication sent allows respondents to distinguish them from the multitude of surveys or polls carried out for other purposes. The statistical survey can also be granted with a mandatory status⁷, which acts as a lever to encourage the recipients to respond, even though, in practice, services first try to persuade people to respond by pointing to the recognition of the public interest of the survey by the CNIS (Le Gléau *et alii*, 2016).

Finally, the official statistics survey status also entails the responsibility of the producer to take all necessary measures to ensure statistical confidentiality during the dissemination of data and results. It gives persons or entities the assurance that this information will only

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be used for statistical purposes. This guarantee concerns the protection of privacy, commercial or business confidentiality. In the areas of social protection or education, for example, certain surveys conducted among administrative services do not require an official statistics status in theory, as their collection relies on persons belonging to the administration. However, granting them this official statistics status allows them to differentiate themselves from purely administrative collection,

submitted to obligations stated in the French Code on the Relationship between the Public and the Administration (CRPA), which do not guarantee the statistical confidentiality.

6. The Decree of 2 May 2013 defines the organisational arrangements for the Quality Label Committee.

7. Failure to respond to a mandatory survey may result in a decision by the Minister for the Economy to impose an administrative or even criminal fine after receiving a favourable opinion from the Litigation Committee for mandatory statistical surveys.

GETTING THE OFFICIAL STATISTICAL STATUS: A TWO-STAGE PROCEDURE

The scope of official statistics surveys (within the meaning of the Statistical Act of 1951) is defined in a quasi-tautological manner: any survey published in the annual decree defining the survey programme is qualified as an “official statistics survey” thus being granted a visa by the Ministry for the Economy.

There are three criteria that must *a priori* be met in order to be included in this scope:

- ① an organic criterion: the survey must be carried out by a public service or similar;
- ① a finality criterion: obtaining statistics;
- ① and a scope criterion: the survey requires the assistance of persons outside of the administration.

Box 1. Regulatory Definition of the Missions of the Quality Label Committee

(Extract from Decree No 2009-318 on the National Council for Statistical Information (CNIS), the Statistical Confidentiality Committee and the Official Statistics Quality Label Committee)

Article 20:

I – The Quality Label Committee, on behalf of the National Council for Statistical Information, shall examine plans involving the gathering of information by means of surveys for which said quality label is being sought, pursuant to Article 2 of the aforementioned Law of 7 June 1951. [...]

It shall verify that said plans:

- a) have been deemed relevant by a chairman of a National Council for Statistical Information subject committee; or
- b) are provided for by a special law; or
- c) are of an indisputably essential, urgent nature.

It shall assess the implementation terms and conditions planned by the department that produces statistics, notably taking into account the plan's statistical quality, the burden that the survey places on the legal entities and individuals forming its subject, the degree of consultation with users and compliance with the terms of the opinion given on its appropriateness. If the plan receives a favourable assessment, the committee shall issue a statement on compliance for the survey and an opinion as to its mandatory nature.

At the request and on behalf of the National Council for Statistical Information, the committee shall examine the statistics produced by privately owned organisations.

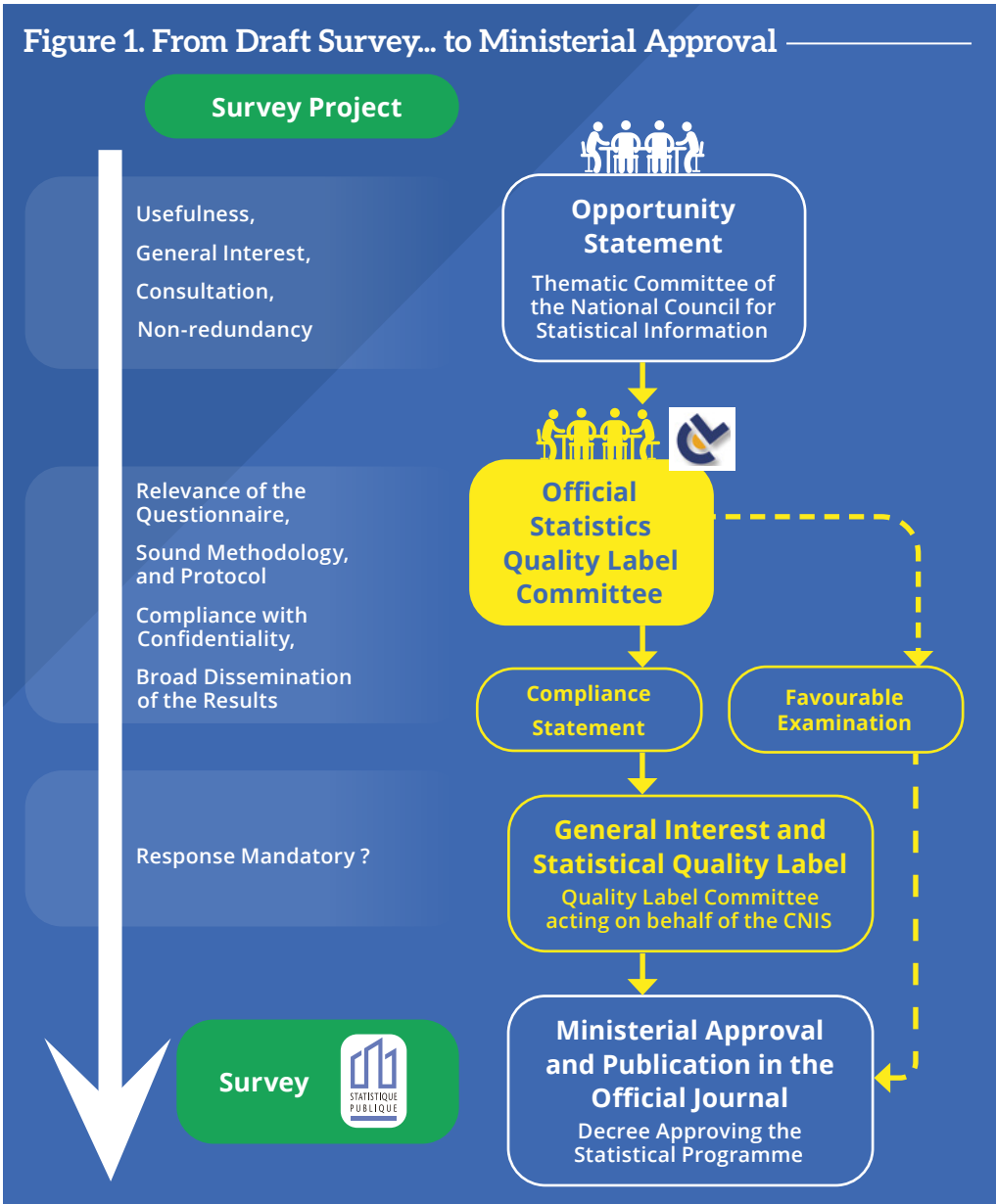
In particular, it shall assess the statistical quality of the procedures leading to said statistics and their compliance with good practices as recognised by the profession. It shall convey the conclusions of this examination to the President of the National Council for Statistical Information.

II. – Official Statistics Quality Label Committee shall examine, on behalf and at the request of the Official Statistics Authority, the processes involved in the use and dissemination of data for general information purposes, collected by government departments, public bodies and private organisations entrusted with public service missions. The results of said examination shall be given in an official statement.



These criteria are quite broad. Ultimately, it is the procedure itself that delineates *a posteriori* the scope of official statistics surveys. In practice, the visa from the Ministry, together with a mention of the mandatory response, when applicable, is granted, by way of delegation, by the Director-General of INSEE.

The procedure for surveys to obtain approval is as follows (Figure 1): they must first obtain **an opportunity or relevancy statement** from the National Council for Statistical Information, which confirms that the survey is useful, that it responds to a general interest need and that it does not duplicate existing sources on the same subject. For regional surveys, the Regional Committee for Economic and Social Information (CRIES) or a regional



body, duly constituted and convened by the Regional Director of INSEE, first decides if the survey is needed, before submission to the CNIS.

However, two cases of urgency are provided for, either within the framework of a special law or as a result of necessity and urgency. The surveys are then deemed to be relevant by nature, and therefore exempt from thorough examination by the National Council for Statistical Information when the deadlines are very tight. This method was used in 2020, particularly for surveys aiming to measure the economic or social effects of the health crisis associated with COVID-19 (surveys such as ACEMO-COVID by DARES⁸ and EpiCov by DREES⁹ and INSERM¹⁰)¹¹.

The second stage consists in obtaining a **compliance statement** from the Label Committee on the basis of a comprehensive instruction analysing the planned process for implementing the survey, from its conception until the dissemination of the results.

The survey then benefits from a “general interest and statistical quality label” issued by the CNIS (in practice the Label Committee by delegation), accompanied where necessary by a proposal to make the survey mandatory for respondents.

📌 GENERAL INTEREST AND STATISTICAL QUALITY: CRITERIA BUILT UP OVER TIME...

The Label Committee has gradually developed its own methods to assess the compliance of surveys to statistical quality. Over the last 25 years, it has built a body of rules that sets out the criteria expected to qualify the surveys, in particular:

- ① *large consultations* with representatives of any kinds of users of the survey: trade unions or professional and civilian organisations concerned, researchers, etc.;
- ① the *content of the questionnaire* and the *non-excessive nature of the questions asked*, which serves to ensure that the information gathered through the survey is not redundant with respect to other sources and that the questions asked are proportionate to the objectives being pursued;
- ① the *collection and processing methodology*, which refers to a large set of methodological subjects on sampling frame and methodology, collection protocol, non-response adjustments and quality checks throughout the process in order to provide precise and unbiased indicators. In addition, there are also questions regarding the definition of concepts prior to their measurement and, where applicable, regarding the compliance of the survey with rules emanating from European or international regulations. Finally, the collection protocol is also reviewed to ensure fair collection with respect to the respondents who are asked to participate, with the aim of ensuring that they are informed of the reasons for which the information is being gathered as well as of their rights;
- ① the measures taken to ensure *confidentiality of the data*;
- ① the *dissemination* plan of the results of the survey and the openness of micro-data, particularly for researchers, still preserving confidentiality issues.

8. Statistical Office of the Ministry of Labour (*Direction de l'animation de la recherche, des études et des statistiques – DARES*).

9. Statistical Office of the Ministry for Solidarity and Health (*Direction de la recherche, des études de l'évaluation et des statistiques – DREES*).

10. National Institute of Health and Medical Research (*Institut national de la santé et de la recherche médicale – INSERM*).

11. See the article by Jean-Luc Tavernier on “INSEE Operations During the Lockdown Period” in this issue.

In order to assess these criteria, the Committee has established a standard instruction file, which allows the requesting services to document the entire survey process, from the design phase to the implementing phase and data processing following the collection. The Committee is especially careful about the upstream consultation phase (the service must indicate and objectify how it consulted the stakeholders and researchers) and the questionnaire testing phase (to assess their length and the cognitive understanding of the questions by the respondents). The Committee also oversees the methodological aspects and in particular the sizing of the sample in order to achieve the expected precision, as well as the adjustments planned, to ensure that there is no response bias and to correct for the negative effects of non-response. In the event of any changes to a regular survey, it examines in particular the strategy put in place to check for any breaks in time series and the way they will be assessed and explained to the users. Finally, it ensures that the means provided for are proportionate to the objectives. The openness of micro-data for researchers (in compliance with confidentiality) is a crucial final criterion, since official statistics surveys are “public goods” serving general interest.

... WHICH FOLLOW THE EUROPEAN APPROACH TO QUALITY

Without specifically referring to them at the outset, these criteria are similar to those defined in the European official statistics framework built since the nineties. In 2001, six quality criteria were set out by Eurostat and officially adopted by the European Statistical Programme Committee: relevance, accuracy, timeliness and punctuality, accessibility and clarity, comparability, and coherence (Desrosières, 2003). They have since been consolidated with the establishment of the European Statistics Code of Practice (CoP) and its 16 principles (European Union, 2017).

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Indeed, the labelling initiatives launched in France within the framework of the CNIS and the Label Committee are in line with this approach. They were also identified by European auditors during the peer review carried out in 2014 as a piece of evidence of the quality of the surveys.

The consultation initiated by the CNIS therefore represents a means of ensuring the relevance of the surveys to meet the needs expressed by users. The compliance review performed by the Label Committee ensures that the design of the surveys follows the state of the art rules in terms of both methodology and deontology. Finally, the instruction files submitted to the Label Committee often form a key element of the documentation of official statistics surveys (*metadata*), which ensures their transparency for users (Bonnans, 2019).

SPECIAL EXAMPLES OF SURVEYS FOR WHICH QUALITY IS NOT CONFIRMED A PRIORI

There may be cases where the Label Committee judges that the survey is indeed of general interest, but that it cannot be fully labelled *ex ante* as it does not immediately fulfil all the criteria set out above. However, the Label Committee can in this case issue a **favourable examination statement** and request the granting of the ministerial visa (**Figure 1**).

These special cases involve the following three situations in particular:

- ① **experimental or pilot surveys:** these are surveys that use highly innovative sampling techniques or questioning methods or for which the strictly methodological results are not intended to be published as such (for example, for the Pilot of the Labour Force Survey, or to gather information on possible effects associated with multimodal collection methods, *via* face-to-face, telephone or the internet). The experimental nature of such work usually leads the Label Committee to deliver a favourable examination statement and not a full compliance statement;
- ① **surveys involving the evaluation of public policies:** these are surveys that make use of complex modelling methodologies that are difficult to assess *ex ante* (for example, concerning the survey on experimenting the “zero long-term unemployment in the territories” policies); due to this uncertainty surrounding the downstream methods, as well as to avoid the risk of manipulation, the Committee avoids issuing any opinions regarding quality *a priori* of the results of these surveys, leaving this responsibility to other bodies, such as specific scientific committees;
- ① **surveys that make use of specific measurement protocols**, including, for example, biological or medical measurements or technical tests (dust sensors, energy or air quality data, etc.), which can only be validated by specialists in these fields. The statement of the Label Committee may be restricted to a limited part of the survey process.

① A SIMPLE STATEMENT FOR SURVEYS THAT ONLY REQUIRE A SAMPLE FROM INSEE

Some surveys conducted for the purposes of scientific or historical research or action research (for example on the knowledge of daily mobility in certain territories) can, under certain conditions, obtain a random sample from the population census or from the statistical repository on housing and people (FIDÉLI).

These surveys are often conducted within the framework of European research infrastructures that have their own governing bodies (as is the case for the European Social Survey, for example, which is conducted every two years in the majority of European countries). The difficulty for the Label Committee in examining these projects resides in the fact that its recommendations often come up against other forms of governance and supra-national specifications and are therefore rarely followed up, as they are defined upstream by an international consortium.

The Label Committee is asked by the INSEE Executive Committee to give its approval for the release of a sample, without this being included in the official statistics survey programme. *“The Executive Committee has validated the fact that, for the sole purpose of obtaining a random sample, the Label Committee may issue, having verified the quality of the sampling plan, the downstream methodology and the bodies governing the project, a simple examination statement rather than a compliance statement. For this reason, the operations in question will not be qualified as official statistics surveys within the meaning of the Law of 1951”.*

Ultimately, although the spirit of the examination by the Label Committee has been to ensure the compliance of methods used with the state of the art, it has developed adapted procedures fitted to different uses and it delivers different types of statements (compliance, favourable examination with a ministerial visa, simple examination without a visa).

A SPECIFIC PROCEDURE FOR LABELLING ADMINISTRATIVE STATISTICS

Among other tasks, the ASP is responsible for labelling statistics produced on the basis of administrative sources and disseminated by bodies fulfilling public service roles, i.e. outside of the Official Statistical Service (OSS)¹².

The procedure put in place for the purposes of establishing these labelling statements was defined by the ASP following a mission entrusted to INSEE's Inspectorate-General (Chappert and Puig, 2011), supplemented for its operational implementation by a guidance note from the Committee's Rapporteur. For these statistics that fall outside of the "*peri-OSS*" surveys frame, the idea was to draw upon the European Statistics Code of Practice by using the principles of this Code that were relevant to the examination of these data (**Box 2**). It was also decided that the Label Committee will be entrusted with examining the labelling files¹³, as is the case for official statistics surveys, this procedure being enshrined in the regulatory texts in 2013.

More specifically, the ASP decides upon the annual programme of administrative statistics that are to be examined. The Label Committee examines the labelling requests decided by the ASP, using a standard documentation file, as is the case with surveys. It meets as a specialised committee and issues a statement that is accompanied by recommendations with a view to ensuring that the statistics comply with the Code. The labelling decision is formally taken by the ASP and is published on its website, together with any associated conditions or recommendations and is published in the Official Journal.

SHOULD WE QUALIFY MORE (SOURCES OF) STATISTICS IN THE FUTURE?

With the survey labelling process having been initiated a little over 25 years ago, the Label Committee has developed an examination methodology that enables it to certify the quality of official statistics surveys and, more recently, statistics produced outside of the OSS by bodies fulfilling public service missions. These approaches have acted as important levers to enable statisticians to carry out their work in accordance with rules that adhere to best practices and ensure transparency. Ultimately, it is the very existence of this governance framework that constitutes a safeguard, preventing as many potential failings as possible.

Within the OSS, the labelling procedures continue to favour traditional surveys, while other data collection methods are not subject to the same level of formality. For a number of reasons (including reduced production costs), administrative sources or mass data are increasingly being used for the production of statistics by the OSS. A question could therefore be raised within the OSS regarding the expansion of the more formal qualification procedures, following the example of the labelling by the ASP of official statistics produced within the "*peri-OSS*" sphere.

12. See the afore-cited article by Dominique Bureau on the ASP in this issue.

13. In some cases, it can also request that INSEE's Inspectorate-General or other inspection bodies perform an examination.

Box 2. Criteria Used by the ASP for the Labelling of Administrative Sources

Independence, Objectivity, Impartiality

- Statistics are produced by a specialised department, which can be identified in the organisational chart, and which possesses the appropriate human and financial resources to perform its statistical missions.
- The head of this department has full autonomy when it comes to deciding on exploitation methods, as well as on the content and dissemination data of the publications.
- Statistics are compiled on an objective basis determined by statistical considerations. Choices of data sources and statistical methods are based on statistical considerations.
- Information on methods and procedures used is publicly available.
- Statistical release dates and times are pre-announced.
- Errors discovered in published statistics are corrected at the earliest possible date and publicised.
- All users have equal access to statistical releases at the same time. Any privileged pre-release access to any outside user is limited, controlled and publicised.
- Statistical releases and statements made in press conferences are objective and non-partisan. Statistical publications are clearly distinguished and issued separately from communications by the organisation regarding the effectiveness of its activities.

Quality and Relevance

- The staff tasked with exploiting statistics possess the necessary skills.
- The organisation has put in place management and quality control procedures for its statistical production that are transparent for users and based on the procedures followed within the OSS.
- The methodological framework follows European and other international standards, guidelines, and good practices.
- Wherever possible, the nomenclatures used are consistent with those used by the OSS. The definitions and concepts used for administrative purposes should, in so far as is possible, be a good approximation of those used in statistics.
- The presentation of the results and the periodicity of and schedule for publication take account of user needs to the greatest possible extent.
- Statistics are presented in a form that facilitates proper interpretation and meaningful comparisons.
- Source data, integrated data, intermediate results and statistical outputs are assessed and validated.
- Revisions follow standard, well-established and transparent procedures.
- Revisions are studied and analysed with the results being used internally to feed into statistical processes.
- The statistics are coherent and can be reconciled for a reasonable period of time (in this respect, any change to the administrative rules or practices that is likely to have an influence on the levels or developments must be made public).
- Metadata concerning the methods and procedures followed, as well as the results linked to the statistical quality of the data are made available to the public.

Furthermore, with the development of digital technology, the production of statistics has largely developed outside of the OSS: there are numerous stakeholders who develop databases or datasets and disseminate statistics as a by-product of their main activity. When looking at the “*peri-OSS*”, few of the statistics produced are labelled by the ASP. As a result, many statistics continue to be picked up by the media without any guarantee of quality or even transparency. A new qualification service was launched in the early 2010s, involving a “calibration” approach by the CNIS for general interest statistics produced by private organisations. This arrangement has proven to be very costly, for both the producing organisations and the Committee, and has not seen the level of development anticipated.

A new qualification method was recently suggested for statistics produced outside of the OSS: the aim would no longer be to attest to the overall quality of the statistics produced, but more simply to induce the minimum transparency of their documentation (*metadata*). This approach, which was recently approved by the CNIS, is currently being tested. The principle would be to establish a standard documentation template, that can be used by organisations on a voluntary basis, with the result that the statistics in question could then be approved by the CNIS. The aim is to induce a virtuous circle: first, make users question the quality of the data and statistics disseminated before using them and second, encourage organisations to document their statistical products in order to meet these expectations.

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