

PEER REVIEW REPORT

ON COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF PRACTICE AND
THE COORDINATION ROLE OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM

FRANCE

GERRY O'HANLON

KATALIN SZÉP

JAGDEV VIRDEE

FEBRUARY 2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
2. INTRODUCTION	6
3. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM	8
4. COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF PRACTICE AND THE COORDINATION ROLE WITHIN THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM	11
4.1 Strengths of the National Statistical Institute in relation to its compliance with the Code of Practice and to its coordination role	11
4.2 Issues and recommendations	13
4.2.1 Strengthening the institutional environment	13
4.2.2 Embedding quality management throughout the statistical system	17
4.2.3 Further enhancing the service to users	20
4.3 National Statistical Institute views where they diverge from peer reviewers' assessment	23
ANNEX A - PROGRAMME OF THE VISIT	24
ANNEX B - LIST OF PARTICIPANTS	26

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

France has a long established and well -resourced statistical system, with almost 8,000 staff deployed at national and local levels on statistical work. The French Statistical System (FSS) consists of the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies (Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques in French and generally known as INSEE), which employs almost 6,000 staff, and 16 Ministerial Statistical Departments (MSDs). A particular strength of the system is the fact that just over one third of the staff hold A grade posts, which means in most cases that the staff concerned have a good quality academic background in mathematics and/or economics and have also benefitted from a further two to three years of full time training on statistics related topics on joining INSEE. The A graded staff, recruited and trained in this manner, are regarded as constituting the “Statistician corps” from which the specialist and managerial posts throughout the statistical system are usually filled. This contributes in practice to an enhanced level of co-ordination and to the adoption of a common culture throughout the system.

The statistical system is also characterised by an elaborate governance and coordination system that *inter alia* encompasses: the assurance of the professional independence of the statistical system by the National Statistical Governance Advisory Board (NSGAB)¹; the structured and systematic determination of the needs of users by the National Statistical Advisory Committee (NSAC)²; the joint determination of the Statistical Programme by INSEE and the MSDs; and the certification of the quality of the statistical surveys and products included in the Statistical Programme by the Official Statistics Quality Label Committee (OSQLC).

Overall, the Peer Review team concluded that there is a high level of compliance with the European statistics Code of Practice (CoP) throughout the statistical system and this is very pronounced in the case of INSEE. However it did identify a number of areas where it believes that there are compliance issues or where the level of compliance could be improved or enhanced. These are discussed, with appropriate recommendations, under three main headings as follows:

- Strengthening the Institutional Environment;
- Embedding Quality Management throughout the Statistical System; and
- Further Enhancing the Service to Users.

The implementation of many of the recommendations may require legislative/institutional changes and thus they are implicitly addressed to the “appropriate relevant authorities” without specific designation. In these cases the Peer Review team assumes that INSEE will take the initial steps at national level in securing an appropriate response to the recommendations.

¹ "Autorité de la Statistique Publique - ASP" in French

² "Conseil National de l'Information Statistique – CNIS" in French

RECOMMENDATIONS

Strengthening the institutional environment

1. Appropriate legal and/or institutional measures should be taken to explicitly empower the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies and the Ministerial Statistical Departments to undertake their mandates in respect of the development, production and dissemination of statistics in a professionally independent manner. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 1.1)
2. The Director General of the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies and, where appropriate, the Directors of the Ministerial Statistical Departments should be assigned the sole responsibility for deciding on statistical methods, standards and procedures, and on the timing and content of statistical releases. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 1.4)
3. Greater transparency should apply in the processes governing the appointment and removal of the Director General of the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies and that the reasons for terminating an incumbency should be specified in law. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 1.8)
4. Appropriate legal and/or other mechanisms should be put in place to ensure that the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies and the Ministerial Statistical Departments are consulted so that the needs of official statistics are taken into account when administrative data systems are being developed or reviewed. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 2 and indicator 8.7)
5. Necessary legal measures should be taken to enable the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies and the Ministerial Statistical Departments to use data held by private entities. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 2.2)
6. The current French statistical legislation covering the guarantee of statistical confidentiality, which envisages the automatic disclosure of confidential data for criminal prosecution and heritage (national archive) purposes, should be reviewed to align it with the corresponding European Union legislative provisions. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 5)
7. The arrangements for pre-release and embargoed access to statistical releases throughout the French Statistical System should be reviewed to align them more closely and uniformly with the European statistics Code of Practice. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 6)

Embedding quality management throughout the statistical system

8. The National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies should develop further its vision, and related integrated and systematic implementation strategy and framework, for embedding quality management throughout the national statistical system. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 4)
9. The National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies should develop further its system to report product quality to users on a regular basis based on the European standard quality criteria. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 4.3)

10. The National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies should continue to develop its metadata system on the basis of European standards. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 15.1)
11. The National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies should develop and publish comprehensive documentation and methodological guidelines for the French Statistical System based on European and other international standards, guidelines and good practices while taking into account the existing common statistical culture that prevails throughout the System. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 7.1)
12. The National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies should build on its existing practices and put in place a systematic programme, and corresponding organisational arrangements, to undertake regular reviews of all statistical surveys and outputs. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 4.3)
13. The National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies should put in place mechanisms to align and integrate the quality management related tasks undertaken by the General Inspectorate, the Directorate for Methodology and Statistical Coordination and International Relations and other departments and committees within the Institute as well as by the Official Statistics Quality Label Committee. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 4.1 and 4.4)

Further enhancing the service to users

14. The user-oriented quality reports and metadata files for all official statistics should be published on the websites of the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies and the Ministerial Statistical Departments as a matter of course. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 15.1 and 15.5)
15. A Revisions policy for official statistics should be prepared and published on the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies' website. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 6.6 and 8.6)
16. The National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies should endeavour to streamline the procedures for approving access to microdata through the Secure Remote Access Centre for researchers so that access can be approved faster than the current 3 to 6 months. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 15.4)
17. The National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies should provide clarification through its website of the different types of microdata and access available through the facilities at the Secure Remote Access Centre, the Centre Quetelet or directly through the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies' website. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 15.2 and 15.4)
18. The National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies and the National Statistical Advisory Committee should establish procedures to consult regularly and raise statistical awareness among potential users of official statistics. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 11.1 and 11.3)

2. INTRODUCTION

This peer review report is part of a series of assessments, the objective of which is to evaluate the extent to which National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) and the European Statistical System (ESS)³ comply with the European statistics Code of Practice (CoP).

The CoP, which sets out a common quality framework for the ESS, was first adopted in 2005 by the Statistical Programme Committee and updated in 2011 by its successor, the European Statistical System Committee. The CoP – 15 principles and related indicators of good practice – covers the institutional environment, the statistical production process and the output of European statistics. The ESS is committed to fully complying with the CoP and is working towards its full implementation. Periodic assessments review progress towards reaching this goal.

The first global assessment, a round of peer reviews in 2006–2008, explored how the NSIs and Eurostat were progressing in implementing the parts of the CoP relating to the institutional environment and dissemination of statistics (principles 1–6 and 15). This resulted in reports for each NSI and Eurostat, available on the Eurostat website⁴. These reports also include a set of improvement actions covering all the principles of the CoP; these informed the annual monitoring of the implementation of the CoP in the ESS in the period 2009-2013.

The scope of this second round of peer reviews is broader: the assessment of CoP compliance covers all principles; the CoP compliance of selected other national producers of European statistics (as well as the NSI) in each country is assessed; and the way in which statistical authorities coordinate the production and dissemination of European statistics within their statistical systems is explored.

It should be underlined that there is a fundamental difference between the reports in the previous round of peer reviews conducted in 2006-2008 and the reports from this round. In the 2006-2008 round compliance with principles 1 to 6 and 15 of the CoP was assessed by means of a four-level scale (fully met; largely met; partly met and not met) and improvement actions were agreed on all 15 principles. After five years of continuous development most of the improvement actions have been implemented and significant progress towards full compliance with the CoP has been made. Therefore, rather than stating the state of play for all principles of the CoP, the reports from the 2013-2015 round mainly focus on issues where full compliance with the CoP has not been found or further improvements are recommended by the Peer Review team.

In order to gain an independent view, the peer review exercise has been externalised and an audit-like approach, where all the answers to the self-assessment questionnaires have to be supported by evidence, has been applied. As in 2006-2008, all EU Member States, the EFTA/EEA countries and Eurostat are subject to a peer review.

Each peer review in the Member States and EFTA/EEA countries is conducted by three reviewers and has four phases: completion of self-assessment questionnaires by a country; their assessment by Peer Reviewers; a peer review visit; and the preparation of reports on the outcomes. The peer review of Eurostat has been conducted by the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB).

³ The ESS is the partnership between the Union statistical authority, which is the Commission (Eurostat), the national statistical institutes (NSIs) and other national authorities responsible in each Member State for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics. This Partnership also includes the EFTA/EEA countries.

⁴ <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/quality/first-round-of-peer-reviews>

To test and complete the methodology, it was piloted in two countries, Iceland and Slovakia, over the summer of 2013.

The peer review of France was conducted by Gerry O'Hanlon (chair), Katalin Szép and Jagdev Virdee, who conducted a peer review visit to Paris on 8th to 12th of December, 2014. The programme of the visit is in Annex A and the list of participants in Annex B.

This report focuses on compliance with the CoP and the coordination of European statistics within the French Statistical System (FSS). The report highlights some of the strengths of the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies (Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques in French and generally known as INSEE) in these contexts and contains recommendations for improvement. Improvement actions developed by INSEE on the basis of this report will be published within the four-week period starting when the final report is sent to the NSI.

3. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM

The French Statistical System (FSS) is legally composed of the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies (Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques in French and generally known as INSEE) and 16 Ministerial Statistical Departments (MSDs). These MSDs are in general statistical departments or divisions of ministries. In January 2014, INSEE had almost 6,000 staff, of which 1,400 were located at the Paris head office, with the remainder spread across the country at the Metz Statistics Centre and the 24 Regional Offices. A further 1,900 staff were employed in the MSDs with almost half located in geographically decentralised locations. With regard to the production of European statistics, the National Central Bank (NCB) and 14 of the 16 MSDs are designated as Other National Authorities (ONAs). In addition, a small number of public and private bodies are permitted to produce some official statistics that are related to their main tasks. Neither the NCB nor any of these bodies are considered to be formally part of the FSS.

Embedding a common culture

An important feature of the FSS is the existence of a common culture and very similar views on statistics shared between INSEE statisticians and most of the hierarchy of the MSDs. A large proportion of staff of the MSDs has either worked for INSEE or come from one of the two High French National Economics and Statistics Schools. This common culture is created through a feature of the French civil service called "corps" (similar to the concept in English of "Army corps" or "diplomatic corps"). The two corps of statisticians are trained after recruitment in the schools of INSEE, one being focussed on statistics, econometrics, economy and finance, and the other mainly on statistical production. These staff are rotated regularly in their career, with the rotation coordinated and synchronised between INSEE and the MSDs. Promotion and movement is coordinated by INSEE, and statisticians can easily move between INSEE and the ministries. This process of regular movement has created a common statistical culture across the FSS.

Statistical legislation

The legal corner stone of French official statistics is the Parliament Act No 51-711 of June 7, 1951 on Legal Obligation, Coordination and Confidentiality in the Field of Statistics (Statistical Law). The Law sets general principles that allow for guaranteeing the professional independence, objectivity, impartiality, relevance and quality of the production of official statistics. INSEE and the MSDs are designated as the statistical agencies comprising the FSS. The National Statistical Governance Advisory Board (NSGAB)⁵ was established as an independent authority in 2009 and is assigned responsibility for overseeing compliance with the principle of professional independence and quality at each stage of the design, production and dissemination of official statistics. Under the Law the National Statistical Advisory Committee (NSAC)⁶ is established as a forum for organising relations between producers and users of official statistics, with a particular remit to draw up a programme detailing user requirements. The Law also establishes the Statistical Confidentiality Committee (SCC), which is mandated to give its opinion on any question related to statistical confidentiality.

⁵ "Autorité de la Statistique Publique - ASP" in French

⁶ "Conseil National de l'Information Statistique - CNIS" in French

Governance of the FSS

NSGAB, NSAC, SCC and some other legally mandated committees have a formal governance role in influencing, overseeing and regulating the work of the FSS.

NSGAB comprises nine nominated members of high standing, with the President appointed by decree of the Council of Ministers on the basis of his qualifications in the legal, economic and technical spheres. NSGAB ensures the professional independence of official statistics and monitors the implementation of the CoP throughout the FSS. NSGAB also plays a role in defining the FSS, and the list of MSDs may be modified by decision of the Minister of the Economy following a recommendation from the Board.

NSAC comprises 46 members, with the President appointed by order of the Minister responsible for the Economy. The membership represents a broad range of national, regional and local stakeholders in the FSS. The full NSAC meets once a year in plenary session. The ongoing work of the Committee is undertaken by an executive board (consisting of 19 members) and seven thematic working groups or commissions. The seven commissions cover: Demography and social issues; Employment, skills, and earned income; Businesses and market strategies; Environment and sustainable development; Public services and services to the public; Financial system and financing of the economy; Territorial units. In addition input is also received from the National Population Assessment Commission.

With regard to the development of the statistical programme, the process involves three steps. NSAC plays the role of coordination between producers and users of statistics and identifies the needs of civil society in respect of official statistics. INSEE and the MSDs, acting through the Statistical Programme Committee (SPC), draw up a common statistical programme taking into account both the statistical needs defined by NSAC and the available budget. NSGAB monitors and checks the accordance between the statistical programme and the needs expressed by NSAC.

Three further committees of a more technical nature supplement the work of NSGAB and NSAC: the Official Statistics Quality Label Committee (OSQLC), the Committee for Litigation on Mandatory Statistical Surveys and the National Commission for Economic and Social Classifications.

The OSQLC assesses the technical quality of all new surveys that will be listed in the official statistical programme and must award them a quality label before they can be included in the programme. All existing surveys are also subject to this certification process as the quality label must be renewed after five years in all cases.

The Committee for Litigation on Mandatory Statistical Surveys must be consulted before imposing penalties - administrative fines - on non-respondents to mandatory statistical surveys.

The National Commission for Economic and Social Classifications is responsible for updating the official economic and social classifications. It must be consulted on any proposal to modify European and international classifications.

The Director General of INSEE speaks on behalf of the FSS in the NSGAB, NSAC, in international and European forums (especially in the ESS), and in other national permanent or temporary commissions involving official statisticians. The Director General also chairs the SPC while INSEE also provides the secretariat of all the governance committees.

Coordination within the FSS

The common culture referred to above and many of the activities outlined in the previous paragraph on governance lead to a coordinated approach being adopted in practice throughout the FSS in regard to the development and implementation of a common statistical programme for the FSS. At a more operational level, INSEE since its inception in 1946 has been mandated to coordinate the statistical work of the MSDs. It seeks to do this on a consensual basis relying for the most part on the common culture and professional background of the senior staff that it can deploy throughout the FSS. The creation of the new Directorate for Methodology, Statistical Coordination and International Relations (DMSCI) in 2012 is now enabling it to focus and formalise its coordination activities to a greater extent.

4. COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF PRACTICE AND THE COORDINATION ROLE WITHIN THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM

This section summarises the Peer Reviewers' assessment of CoP compliance and the nature and effectiveness of coordination within the NSS. In line with the review mandate, the first section focuses on the strengths of the NSI while the second explores specific issues and makes specific recommendations that the Peer Review team considers would strengthen compliance throughout the system as a whole.

4.1 STRENGTHS OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL INSTITUTE IN RELATION TO ITS COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF PRACTICE AND TO ITS COORDINATION ROLE

France has a long established and well resourced statistical system, with almost 8,000 staff deployed at national and local levels on statistical work. Just over one third of the staff hold A grade posts, which means in most cases that the staff concerned have a good quality academic background in mathematics and/or economics and have also benefitted from a further two to three years of full time training on statistics related topics on joining INSEE. The A graded staff, recruited and trained in this manner, are regarded as constituting the "Statistician corps" from which the specialist and managerial posts throughout the statistical system are usually filled. There is therefore a high degree of mobility between INSEE and the Ministerial Statistical Departments (MSDs) at this level and this contributes in practice to an enhanced level of co-ordination and to the adoption of a common culture throughout the system. The Peer Review team fully agrees with the view of INSEE management that this senior level mobility is a significant strength of the French Statistical System (FSS). (CoP indicators 3.1, 7.5, 7.6)

A notable feature of the FSS is the extent to which it provides a service to users at national, regional and local levels. Furthermore, it goes beyond the core functions of a statistical service of providing basic or primary data to engaging to a significant extent in the production of analytical reports (including forecasts) that are tailored to the needs of users. These activities can be seen as complementing the core statistical activities in that they provide a first-hand insight into the use of the primary data and its quality as well as providing a deeper understanding of the needs of users. (CoP Principle 15)

The FSS is also characterised by an elaborate governance system that *inter alia* encompasses: the assurance of the professional independence of the FSS by the National Statistical Governance Advisory Board (NSGAB); the structured and systematic determination of the needs of users by the National Statistical Advisory Committee (NSAC); and the certification of the quality of the statistical surveys and products included in the Statistical Programme by the Official Statistics Quality Label Committee (OSQLC). The Peer Review team was very impressed by the comprehensive and integrated nature of the FSS governance system and the high level of resources committed towards achieving its objectives. (CoP Principles 1 and 11)

Overall, the team concluded that there is a high level of compliance with the CoP throughout the FSS and this is very pronounced in the case of INSEE. Many of the principles are underpinned by the national statistical legislation. Professional Independence (CoP Principle 1) is largely addressed in Article 1, Section I of the "Statistical Law" (Act No. 51-711 of June 7th 1951) when it states that "official statistics are designed, produced and disseminated with complete professional independence". This is then reinforced by Section II of the same article with the creation of NSGAB with a mandate to "ensure compliance with the principle of professional independence". The mandate to collect data (CoP Principle 2) directly, and to use administrative data for statistical

purposes, is also clearly covered in the Statistical Law. The requirement to respect statistical confidentiality is set down in Article 6, which also provides for the high level Statistical Confidentiality Committee (SCC) to oversee the implementation of the principle in practice.

INSEE devotes significant resources to statistical methodology and quality assurance (CoP Principles 4, 7-8, and 11-14) – although the Peer Review team believes that there is a need to adopt a more structured and integrated approach to reap the full benefits from this investment (see next section). A major restructuring of INSEE in 2012 resulted in the creation of the new centralised Directorate for Methodology, Statistical Coordination and International Relations (DMSCI). The mission of the new directorate includes: the development of the most efficient statistical methods, the promotion of statistical quality, and the fostering of innovation. Within the Directorate the Statistical Methods Division already has a staff complement of almost 50 experts while the Quality Unit has a further 12-15 engaged. The Peer Review team was informed that many of the statistical divisions also have many staff with strong methodological backgrounds and it noted that the two MSDs reviewed contained dedicated methodological units to support their work. Overall, the Peer Reviewers would consider that the FSS, and INSEE in particular, has a very strong methodological base with a focus on achieving high quality.

Since 2003, INSEE has made its website the main vehicle for disseminating its works. Users of official statistics can find, free of charge, the major macroeconomic indicators, reference statistics on numerous economic and social topics, interactive info-graphics, maps, databases, all INSEE's publications, as well as tools for revising maintenance allowances or calculating a personalized price index. Local data are being requested more and more frequently and an effort has been made to make them easier to access. The number of visits has risen steadily from 10.8 million in 2004 to 29.4 million in 2013. Users who have trouble finding information can call INSEE Contact, a service that centralizes all questions received by the INSEE and provides answers on a continuous basis. It forwards the most complex questions to INSEE experts. In 2011, a mobile version of the site was launched enabling users to retrieve information with cell phones and tablets. The website has a significant content in English and there is a portal that facilitates ready access to the statistics produced by the MSDs. Access for researchers to microdata is provided through a combination of the INSEE website (public use files), the Centre Quetelet Data Archive (anonymised files with a low risk of disclosure) and the Secure Remote Access Centre (CASD) - for controlled access to confidential files. (CoP Principle 15)

In its review the Peer Review team came across many good and innovative type practices that are worthy of noting in the context of being applicable, whole or in part, to good effect in other national settings. It would draw particular attention to the following:

- the “Statistician corps” approach adopted in regard to the recruitment, training and deployment of specialist and managerial staff throughout the statistical system; and
- the integrated and comprehensive statistical governance of the FSS, including structured user consultation and quality certification, afforded through the work and interaction of NSGAB, NSAC and the OSQLC.

4.2 ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As mentioned in the previous section the Peer Review team concluded that there is a high level of overall compliance with the CoP. However it did identify a number of areas where it believes that the level of compliance could be improved or enhanced. These are discussed, with appropriate recommendations, under three main headings as follows:

- Strengthening the institutional environment;
- Embedding quality management throughout the statistical system; and
- Further enhancing the service to users.

The implementation of many of the recommendations may require legislative/institutional changes and thus they are implicitly addressed to the “appropriate relevant authorities” without specific designation. In these cases the Peer Review team assumes that INSEE will take the initial steps at national level in securing an appropriate response to the recommendations.

4.2.1 STRENGTHENING THE INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

In the following paragraphs issues are discussed in relation to Professional Independence, Mandate for Data Collection, Statistical Confidentiality and Equality of Access.

Professional independence

Professional independence is taken very seriously within the French Statistical System (FSS) and no concerns were raised with the Peer Review team in respect of the implementation of the principle in practice. Furthermore, as already stated, there is a strong legal underpinning for the principle in Article 1 of the Statistical Law, where it is required that official statistics are designed, produced and disseminated with “complete professional independence” and the National Statistical Governance Advisory Board (NSGAB) is mandated to “ensure compliance with the principle of professional independence”. In the Decree no. 2009-250 of 3 March 2009, concerning the Public Statistics Authority, it is stated in Article 1 that NSGAB:

“Issues any opinion it deems necessary in order to guarantee compliance with the principle of professional independence during the design, production and dissemination of public statistics, as well as with the principles of objectivity, impartiality, relevance and quality of the data produced having regard to the European statistics Code of Practice mentioned in regulation (EC) n° 223/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2009 on European statistics;”

Article 2 of the decree goes on to state that NSGAB can decide to publish any of its opinions. In this way it would appear that NSGAB’s principal functions in this respect is to be a public advocate for the professional independence of official statistics and to be a deterrent to any malpractice through its ability to comment publicly.

The Peer Reviewers consider that this is a very strong recognition of the importance of the professional independence principle and provides a firm basis for ensuring compliance in practice. However, the Peer Review team notes that the ability of INSEE or the Ministerial Statistical Departments (MSDs) to act in a professionally independent manner is not explicitly specified in law (as would appear to be intended by CoP indicator 1.1). More strikingly, no legal powers are given explicitly to the Director General of INSEE or to the Directors of the MSDs to have “the sole authority for ensuring that statistics are developed, produced and disseminated in an independent manner” (CoP indicator 1.4). The Peer Review team considers that the existence of such powers would bring the FSS closer to compliance with the CoP.

To achieve better compliance with the CoP, the Peer Reviewers recommend that:

- 1. Appropriate legal and/or institutional measures should be taken to explicitly empower the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies and the Ministerial Statistical Departments to undertake their mandates in respect of the development, production and dissemination of statistics in a professionally independent manner (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 1.1)**
- 2. The Director General of the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies and, where appropriate, the Directors of the Ministerial Statistical Departments should be assigned the sole responsibility for deciding on statistical methods, standards and procedures, and on the timing and content of statistical releases. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 1.4)**

In common with other top public servants in the French public administration, the Director General of INSEE is appointed and removed by the French President through a decree of the Council of Ministers. Under French legislation, there is no restriction on the right of the French President to appoint, transfer or remove, without giving cause, any officials at the top level. Furthermore, when a vacancy arises there is no formal open application or assessment procedure prior to the issuing of the decree by the Council. The Peer Review team was informed that over the past 40 years all but one of the Directors General appointed were graduates of an INSEE “Grande École”, had worked at some stage of their career in INSEE, and had been involved in various economic or statistical positions prior to their appointment. The team is also aware that in recent years one Director General was removed by the Council of Ministers and transferred to another senior position in the public administration without any explanation being provided.

The Peer Review team was assured that the appointment/removal procedures have never been the subject of political or public debate in France and that opinion polls continue to indicate a high degree of public trust in INSEE. Moreover, it would appear that persons of the highest calibre have been appointed as Director General over the years. However, the Peer Reviewers consider that the lack of transparency in the appointment/removal procedures is a weakness in the French system that has the potential to impact negatively on the professional independence of INSEE and, by extension, on that of the wider statistical system. It is also, in the opinion of the Peer Review team, not fully compliant with CoP indicator 1.8, when it requires that the “reasons on the basis of which the incumbency are terminated are specified in the legal framework”. The Peer Review team also notes that the current draft proposals to amend Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 stipulate that the “procedures for recruitment, transfer and dismissal of heads of NSIs shall be transparent and based on professional criteria only”. In the event that the draft proposal is adopted it is clear that some amendment to the French procedures will be required.

To achieve compliance with the CoP, the Peer Reviewers recommend that:

- 3. Greater transparency should apply in the processes governing the appointment and removal of the Director General of the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies and that the reasons for terminating an incumbency should be specified in law. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 1.8)**

Mandate for data collection

The use of administrative data, held by both public authorities and private entities, for statistical purposes is now a top priority for official statisticians everywhere. The French Statistical Law enables access by INSEE and the MSDs to administrative data held by public authorities (Article 7 bis).

In order to ensure that the statistical potential of administrative data is fully realised it is important that statistical authorities are involved in the design of these data (CoP 8.7). Equally, when statistics are based on an administrative source, it is vital that the statistical authorities are consulted before any changes to the administrative system, which could impact on the data, are implemented. This is particularly the case if it is planned to simplify the administrative data collection system (e.g. by reducing the range of data collected) as this could damage the derived statistical series. The Peer Review team was informed that there are good formal and informal working relations between the statistical and administrative authorities. However, the Peer Review team believes that these arrangements should be underpinned by appropriate legal and/or other formal mechanisms.

While Article 7 bis of the Statistical Law enables access by INSEE and the MSDs to administrative data held by public authorities, no such provision exists in respect of data held by private entities. Data such as "scanner data" from the retail trade and data held by mobile phone operators, which are usually held by private entities, have been identified in recent years as having a significant potential for the production of official statistics. Accordingly, the Peer Review team believes that the French Statistical Law should be amended to provide for access to such data.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 4. Appropriate legal and/or other mechanisms should be put in place to ensure that the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies and the Ministerial Statistical Departments are consulted so that the needs of official statistics are taken into account when administrative data systems are being developed or reviewed. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 2 and indicator 8.7)**
- 5. Necessary legal measures should be taken to enable the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies and the Ministerial Statistical Departments to use data held by private entities. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 2.2)**

Statistical confidentiality

Article 6 of the French Statistical Law provides for the guarantee of statistical confidentiality as follows:

"Without prejudice to the provisions of articles 40, 56, 76, 97 and 99 of the Code of Criminal Procedure and those of article L. 213-3 of the Heritage Code, individual data in questionnaires displaying the visa provided for under article 2 of this law and pertaining to private and family life and, more generally speaking, to facts and behaviour of a private nature cannot, except subsequent to a decision by the archives administration, taken after requesting the opinion of the Committee on Statistical Confidentiality and on the basis of a request made for the purposes of official statistics or scientific or historical research, be communicated by the archive repository service until seventy five years after the date when the survey was carried out or twenty-five years after the date of decease of the person concerned, if the latter occurs first.

Without prejudice to the provisions of articles 40, 56, 76, 97 and 99 of the Code of Criminal Procedure and those of article L. 213-3 of the Heritage Code, individual data of an economic or financial nature in questionnaires displaying the visa provided for under article 2 of this law cannot, except subsequent to a decision by the archives administration, taken after requesting the opinion of the Committee on Statistical Confidentiality, be communicated by the archive repository service until twenty-five years after the date when the census or survey was carried out.

This information cannot under any circumstances be used for the purposes of tax controls or economic penalties. Pursuant to the provisions of article L. 84 of the Register of Tax Procedures

and article 64 A of the Customs Code, repositories of information of this nature are not bound by the obligations pertaining to the right of the administration to require the communication of such information. Public servants and staff working for bodies acting as agents for the survey-taking pursuant to the provisions of article 4 are bound by professional secrecy and subject to the penalties set out under articles 226-13 and 226-14 of the Penal Code.

Statistical censuses and surveys carried out in accordance with the provisions of this law are regarded as public archives”

There are a number of issues to note in respect of this provision. First, it is clearly stated that all censuses and surveys are regarded as public archives. It was clarified to the Peer Review team that this includes not only the original return obtained in respect of a respondent but also the return as adjusted for statistical purposes within the statistical agency. This automatic inclusion of all statistical returns as public archives, irrespective of whether they were obtained from a sample and/or on a voluntary basis, is unusual in the experience of the Peer Reviewers. Secondly, the time allowed before the returns are released by the archive repository service is, in the opinion of the team, somewhat short. In the case of natural persons the interval of 75 years is less than the average life expectancy and hence many respondents will still be alive when returns containing their details become public. In the case of legal entities the interval of 25 years might also be considered to be relatively short particularly in the context of sensitive information that might not otherwise be in the public domain. Finally, all returns are automatically released if required under the provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure, which is not generally the case in other countries.

Overall, the Peer Reviewers consider that the guarantee of statistical confidentiality in the French Statistical Law is more relaxed than that applying elsewhere. In particular, it is less stringent than that stipulated in Article 20.2 of Regulation (EC) 223/2009 in respect of European statistics.

To achieve better compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 6. The current French statistical legislation covering the guarantee of statistical confidentiality, which envisages the automatic disclosure of confidential data for criminal prosecution and heritage (national archive) purposes, should be reviewed to align it with the corresponding European Union legislative provisions. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 5)**

Equality of access

INSEE publishes on its website a clear policy statement on its relations with the press and media, which includes its rules for making its output available under embargo prior to the official release time. The pre-release times vary from 15 minutes (to press agencies only) in the case of key economic indicators to two days in the case of complex analytical reports, which do not involve the first release of primary statistical results or data. In the policy statement it is clearly stated that *“In the event that a media breaks the embargo (a rare occurrence), all other media are, in as far as possible, immediately notified via a press release of the early lifting of the embargo. Equal treatment is thus re-established.”* Thus in regard to its pre-release of statistics to the media, INSEE fully complies with CoP 6.7.

With regard to pre-release to Government, the practices are less clear and may vary between statistical authorities across the statistical system. For example, INSEE clearly indicates in conformity with the International Monetary Fund’s Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) that in respect of the main economic indicators *“The economic indicators are communicated to the Offices of the Presidency of the Republic, the Prime Minister and the Minister for the Economy*

under embargo at 6:00 pm the day before they are to be published.” However, in discussion with one MSD it was revealed that analytical reports are released to the Minister’s office up to 5 working days in advance and, in the case of the first release of data, the pre-release can be up to 5 calendar days. It was mentioned by one user to the Peer Review team that these practices can give rise to at least the perception that the political system can influence the results. It was also noted that in the 2013 Annual Report of NSGAB it was stated that complaints were made to two Ministries by the Board in respect of leaks in advance of the specified publication time.

Overall, the Peer Reviewers consider that the pre-release arrangements in the FSS are somewhat unevenly applied and in some cases are more relaxed than what would normally be considered best practice in the context of the CoP.

To further improve compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 7. The arrangements for pre-release and embargoed access to statistical releases throughout the French Statistical System should be reviewed to align them more closely and uniformly with the European statistics Code of Practice. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 6)**

4.2.2 EMBEDDING QUALITY MANAGEMENT THROUGHOUT THE STATISTICAL SYSTEM

Overall vision and strategy for quality management

A formal quality policy document as such has not been produced. However, there is a declaration by the Director General of INSEE on the website outlining the commitment to quality of the French Statistical System (FSS). However, this does not give any specific descriptions of quality objectives nor does it provide a quality framework description. At central level in INSEE the CoP is considered to be a basic reference document setting down quality guidelines for application throughout the FSS. Furthermore, the National Statistical Advisory Committee (NSAC) has endorsed a policy of broadening the reach of the CoP to encompass all official statistics from this point on, including those produced solely for national use. The practices of the official statistics system are also characterized on the website of INSEE as being in accordance with the CoP principles. In the new DMSCI there is a Quality Unit with responsibility for quality management and metadata in INSEE and for the provision, and the promotion of the use of appropriate tools across the statistical service. The General Inspectorate of INSEE can also undertake or commission audits that examine quality related issues. Finally, the Official Statistics Quality Label Committee (OSQLC) assesses the technical quality of all surveys included in the statistical programme. In principle, all new surveys must apply for the quality label and all existing surveys must re-apply for the label after five years. Thus at central level the Peer Review team has seen many elements dealing with quality, but their role and activities do not seem to constitute an integrated or systematic overall approach.

In the subject matter divisions the commitment to the CoP and quality is also considerable. Quality action plans have been compiled, updated and implemented since 2006. There is also a tradition of adopting high quality approaches by the subject matter statisticians, who are well qualified, in respect of the statistical processes implemented and products produced under their supervision. As a result, the Peer Review team was informed that major quality problems occur extremely rarely. The new Quality Unit is gradually developing and promoting the use of more standardised tools. A Quality Framework for household surveys is being introduced within INSEE and a corresponding framework for administrative sources is under development. The CoP is again reported to be the quality guideline but there is not a more detailed description of the statistical production process requirements according to a business process model for statistics, nor a

description of the methods to monitor the quality of each stage of the production process. This means, in particular, that quality guidelines are not available.

In summary, despite the impressive set of tools and high quality work, there is no overall explicit corporate vision and related strategic plan for implementing quality management on a systematic and integrated basis throughout INSEE and the FSS. The objective should be to build the vision of a system in which all methods are linked to each other, and finally fit together as a system, in which the individual components reinforce each other. Within this there is a need for defining quality criteria, for example: characteristics of statistical products, user perceptions, standards, and quality guidelines for statistical processes. The measurement and documentation of products and processes according to agreed quality criteria are preconditions of quality assessment. Assessment tools and methods, such as self-assessments and audits, provide a picture of the degree of conformity with standards and other requirements. The complete documentation of the whole exercise is important for the producers as a means of prompting continuous improvements, while in a condensed form it can be a source of information and assurance to users.

Having elaborated such a vision, there is then a need to build a strategy for implementation that ideally would make maximum use of existing tools and methods and the inter-linkages between them. For example, the development of the new quality reports, quality indicators and process variables should build on the existing quality tables and methodological information. Quality requirements, documentation and assessment procedures should be consistent with one another and also with corresponding European guidelines and applied uniformly throughout the statistical system. Furthermore, the quality criteria set down by the OSQLC should preferably be in line with the accepted quality guidelines and criteria so that outputs from the formal quality management system can be used directly in the label assessment process.

The Peer Review team believes that the adoption and implementation of the vision and strategy outlined above has the potential to realise significant synergies and efficiencies throughout INSEE and the FSS.

To further improve compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 8. The National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies should develop further its vision, and related integrated and systematic implementation strategy and framework, for embedding quality management throughout the national statistical system. (European statistics Code of Practice, Principle 4)**

In the following paragraphs, some of the specific elements necessary for the implementation of a more structured and integrated approach to quality are discussed.

Regular quality reports

For the most important statistical outputs of INSEE quality tables are published, mostly from the producer's rather than the user's point of view, but they do not cover all of the ESS standard quality criteria as defined in Article 12 of the European Statistical Law. For example, quality tables have information on non-response and sampling errors within the methodological or technical description of the survey, but do not describe product quality according to European quality criteria, like comparability and coherence. Quality reports are produced for Eurostat as required but not always made publicly available. Finally, user oriented quality reports are not always published or made available on the websites of INSEE and/or the Ministerial Statistical Departments (MSDs).

To further improve compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 9. The National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies should develop further its systems to report product quality to users on a regular basis based on the European standard quality criteria. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 4.3)**

Development of metadata in line with European standards

On the website of INSEE the definitions and information on methods are published for the different surveys and statistics. In some cases a more detailed description of methodology is also available. Some methodological information can also be found on the websites of the MSDs but the practice varies between ministries. The Peer Review team also found different templates to describe statistical processes, and they often do not follow European or other international standards, such as the General Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM). Furthermore, the meta-information provided on the web does not follow the ESS standards (i.e. Euro-SDMX Metadata Structure (ESMS) or ESS Standard for Quality Reports Structure (ESQRS)).

Metadata and quality issues are closely related. Measurement and documentation should be built up as a basis for data quality assessment. The documentation system should be continuously improved and completed together with the data quality management system. Metadata systems should be linked as much as possible to data quality assessment methods in order to establish an efficient system.

There is a need for a standard metadata system which can serve different purposes and does not overburden statisticians. This could simultaneously serve as a source of basic documentation for assessment, improved methodological transparency and the enhancement and development of internal standards.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 10. The National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies should continue to develop its metadata system on the basis of European standards. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 15.1)**

Detailed methodological guidelines and classifications

There are no written specific methodological guidelines available that are more detailed than the CoP principles to orientate and guide the development of statistical processes in INSEE and the FSS. Methodological documentation is available for the different surveys, in some cases even detailed versions. But these are specific to the given survey. The DMSCI started its work in 2012 and in the INSEE annual report there is reference to its work in developing methods for sample selection, calculating accuracy and handling non-response - but the results are not systematically available, and would appear to be promoted mainly through training within INSEE. The development and documentation of standard methods and procedures for implementing statistical processes would therefore be desirable and would be a basis for more effective methodological coordination within the FSS. The Peer Review team considers that the tasks of the DMSCI might therefore be broadened in this respect.

The use of standard concepts and classifications – as part of a methodological framework - is a basis to improve coherence and consistency within the FSS and between the FSS and the ESS. The National Commission for Economic and Social Classifications, which is chaired by the Director General of INSEE or his nominee, is the designated body to keep classifications updated and provide a forum to achieve consensus. However, there is not a full picture available on the classifications used in the FSS, as only some of the main general classifications are available on

the INSEE website, and nothing on many classifications used in subject matter areas, such as agriculture, industry or trade. While mandatory European standard classifications are applied and considered compulsory there is no information attached to the national classifications to indicate if they are the same as the corresponding European classifications. Furthermore, it is not always clear who is responsible for making decisions on national classification systems.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, the Peer Reviewers recommend that:

- 11. The National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies should develop and publish comprehensive documentation and methodological guidelines for the French Statistical System based on European and other international standards, guidelines and good practices while taking into account the existing common statistical culture that prevails throughout the System. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 7.1)**

More integrated and systematic organisational approach to quality

As mentioned already, there are many divisions and committees engaged in quality related work within INSEE and the wider FSS. These include: the Quality Unit; the General Inspectorate; the OSQLC; the Process Monitoring Committee; the Committee for Quality Assessment; and the quality units in some MSDs. The work of these divisions and committees is often in addition to the quality work undertaken by the individual subject matter areas within INSEE and the MSDs. In the absence of an overall coordinated approach many of these areas work independently of one another thus leading to duplication of work and gaps in quality-related work and in the conduct of regular reviews.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, the Peer Reviewers recommend that:

- 12. The National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies should build on its existing practices and put in place a more systematic programme, and corresponding organisational arrangements, to undertake regular reviews of all statistical surveys and outputs. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 4.3)**
- 13. The National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies should put in place mechanisms to align and integrate the quality management related tasks undertaken by the General Inspectorate, the Directorate for Methodology and Statistical Coordination and International Relations and other departments and committees within the Institute as well as by the Official Statistics Quality Label Committee. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 4.1 and 4.4)**

4.2.3 FURTHER ENHANCING THE SERVICE TO USERS

The French Statistical System (FSS) has wide ranging arrangements in place to consult with users of official statistics, organise discussion between users and producers of official statistics, and collectively develop a programme of work based on agreed priorities. Most of this user consultation is carried out through the National Statistical Advisory Committee (NSAC) and its thematic working groups. Membership of this network mainly includes representatives of national organisations, with some representation of regional and local authorities. The recommendations below aim to enhance and strengthen the compliance with the CoP in this area and improve the service to existing and potential users of official statistics.

Publication of quality reports and metadata

Recommendations 9 and 10 above aim to improve the production of quality reports and metadata for official statistics. While harmonised quality reports are sent to Eurostat, when required, the quality tables available on the INSEE website, as already mentioned, do not follow the European guidelines. In general, the more detailed quality reports and metadata are mainly only available within INSEE and the Ministerial Statistical Departments (MSDs), either on INSEE's intranet or on the extranet that also provides access to the MSDs. The Peer Review team believes that the user-oriented quality reports and metadata would be a useful resource for users outside the official statistics system.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 14. The user-oriented quality reports and metadata files for all official statistics should be published on the websites of the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies and the Ministerial Statistical Departments as a matter of course. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 15.1 and 15.5)**

Revisions policy

Revisions to published statistics are dealt with in a reasonable manner by INSEE and to varying degrees by the MSDs, but generally on a case-by-case basis. There is no policy laid down and agreed which would be applicable to the official statistics system as a whole. The Peer Review team proposes that INSEE, in consultation with NSAC, should develop and adopt a formal revisions policy for application throughout the FSS.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, **the Peer Reviewers recommend that:**

- 15. A Revisions policy for official statistics should be prepared and published on the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies' website. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 6.6 and 8.6)**

Access to microdata

Microdata from statistical surveys in France are categorised into three groups: (i) public use files (anonymised), (ii) scientific use files (low risk), and (iii) confidential files. Three main facilities are used for sharing these data more widely. Firstly, public-use files are made available directly by INSEE. Secondly, the Centre Quetelet is an established facility that primarily makes microdata available in the first two categories – public use files and low-risk files for scientific use. Thirdly, the Secure Remote Access Centre (CASD) provides access for approved researchers to confidential microdata for agreed research purposes.

Users of these services generally recognise that data provided by INSEE will be of high quality, and accessibility now is far better than 10 years ago. CASD is now the preferred route for researchers to get access to data. The facility provides a secure environment, an increasing number of datasets, and a wide range of software for analysing the data, subject to specific protocols. It provides a potentially excellent facility for researchers in universities. However, the process for obtaining approval of projects can take three to six months – mainly reflecting the need to satisfy the requirements set down by the Statistical Confidentiality Committee. This provides a significant barrier to access, particularly where Masters level students need to complete projects within a year.

Existing and potential users of microdata would also benefit from greater clarification of the different types of data available through each route, and better signposting of the facilities, on the INSEE website. Some users' requirements may be met through the public use files, whereas others

who could benefit from the CASD facilities and request new datasets to be made available, may not know of this capability.

To further improve compliance with the CoP, the Peer Reviewers recommend that:

16. The National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies should endeavour to streamline the procedures for approving access to microdata through the Secure Remote Access Centre for researchers so that access can be approved faster than the current 3 to 6 months. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicator 15.4)
17. The National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies should provide clarification through its website of the different types of microdata and access available through the facilities at the Secure Remote Access Centre, the Centre Quetelet or directly through the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies' website. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 15.2 and 15.4)

Raising statistical awareness

As discussed at the beginning of this section, wide ranging arrangements exist in France to consult with users of official statistics, mainly through the NSAC and its thematic working groups. Membership of NSAC is described in Chapter 3, and consists mainly of representatives of organisations that are long established users of official statistics. User satisfaction surveys are also conducted, and results used to inform future work programmes. The analyses of the user satisfaction surveys are shared internally on the INSEE intranet and sometimes published more widely.

INSEE has a programme of raising statistical awareness through schools, which is commended. However, the benefits of this programme will take some time to feed through to the population at large. The Peer Reviewers believe that more could be done to improve the awareness of statistics in the wider population and smaller organisations, such as voluntary groups and charities. This could particularly benefit potential users of statistics at local levels, and INSEE's regional offices could play a significant and useful role in this.

To further enhance compliance with the CoP, the Peer Reviewers recommend that:

18. The National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies and the National Statistical Advisory Committee should establish procedures to consult regularly and raise statistical awareness among potential users of official statistics. (European statistics Code of Practice, indicators 11.1 and 11.3)

4.3 NATIONAL STATISTICAL INSTITUTE VIEWS WHERE THEY DIVERGE FROM PEER REVIEWERS' ASSESSMENT

INSEE thanks the auditors for the high quality and professionalism of their work. INSEE welcomes the overall appreciation of its high degree of compliance with the European Code of Practice regarding its production of European statistics. There is room for further improvement and the opinions stated by the auditors appear relevant to INSEE.

INSEE welcomes recommendations on the institutional context, which are formally in line with those of the previous peer review, even though substantial institutional changes have been implemented over the last seven years. The current situation meets the intent of the Code of Practice but is not formally and fully aligned. However the institute does not have the power of decision in this field and has to facilitate these developments in a constrained legal framework bearing in mind the interests of all stakeholders. This is also the case with regard to the recommendations for which the institute is formally in line with the European statistical code of practice but could have a more ambitious interpretation in its implementation, for instance recommendation 7 on the embargo rules.

Regarding these recommendations, and in particular those needing law changes, INSEE will engage all its efforts to encourage successful implementation. However it is not within its power to guarantee full, or partial, implementation, nor even the timeline.

INSEE fully endorses the recommendations on quality management emphasising the need to continuously improve in this field. In this regard, a formalised systematic framework describing standard methods appears essential. This will enable efficient documentation of processes and procedures. The same applies for the definition of quality indicators measuring the statistical production quality standards and defining areas for progress, which INSEE considers as a priority.

Nevertheless, INSEE would also like to highlight the importance of implementing formalisation in a balanced manner. As economic and social statistics measure complex and evolving concepts, it is not possible to define systematic methods covering all possible cases, especially in the case of final outcome validation. In a certain number of cases, it is necessary to call upon human expertise, which is inherently difficult to sum up in a procedure. Excessive formalisation can, on one hand dramatically increase the efforts required to make the process evolve, which can be a handicap in a rapidly changing environment as observed today, and on the other hand lead to the loss of sight of the targeted objectives.

Therefore and in order to achieve greater statistical process efficiency, INSEE has the objective of putting forward a quality approach combining greater formalisation with the identification of areas requiring more flexibility to preserve the necessary responsiveness to economic and social changes.

ANNEX A - PROGRAMME OF THE VISIT

PEER REVIEW VISIT TO FRANCE

8 – 12 December 2014

AGENDA

Time	Programme	Organisation
Day 1 - Monday 8 December 2014		
09.00–10.30	1 PR team discussion to finalise the preparation of the visit.	
10.30- 10.45	Coffee break	
10.45-12.00	2 Preparatory meeting with the NSI coordinator team	INSEE B.Rouppert, O. Rascol, S. Lefranc
12.00-12.30	3 Welcome and introduction to visit	INSEE J.L. Tavernier, S. Grégoir, B. Rouppert
12.30-13.15	Lunch	
13.15-14.15	4 General information session with a description on how the national statistical system is organised (bodies, distribution of responsibilities, relations between authorities).	INSEE R. Depoutot, S. Grégoir, B. Rouppert
14.15-15.30	5 The statistical law and related legislation governing the Institutional Environment for Statistics (CoP principles 1, 2, 5 and 6)	INSEE M. Isnard, R. Depoutot, S. Grégoir, B. Rouppert
15.30-15.45	Coffee break	
15.45-17.15	6 Co-ordination, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of NSI • NSGAB • Definition and/or certification of Official Statistics 	INSEE R. Depoutot, S. Grégoir, M. Christine, B. Rouppert
Day 2 - Tuesday 9 December 2014		
09.00-10.45	7 Dissemination, including user consultation (CoP principles 6, 11 and 15)	INSEE F. Maurel, L. Olier, F. Brunet, B. Rouppert
10.45-11.00	Coffee break	
11.00-12.30	8 Presentation of NSAC	NSAC INSEE P. Audibert, B. Rouppert
12.30-13.30	Lunch	
13.30-14.30	9 Meeting with NSGAB	NSGAB P. Champsaur
14.30-16.00	10 Meeting with main users – Ministries and other public institutions (including Central Bank as a user)	DGAFP BdF INSEE A. Friez, V. Oung, B.Rouppert
16.00-16.15	Coffee break	
16.15-17.30	11 Meeting with main users - scientific community	GENES CASD Centre Quetelet INSEE A. Frachot, K. Gadouche, R. Silberman, B.Rouppert, A. Bozio

Time		Programme	Organisation		
			IFS		
Day 3 - Wednesday 10 December 2014					
09.00-10.30	12	Meeting with ONA1	SSP INSEE	B. Sédillot, R. Depoutot, S. Grégoir, B. Rouppert	
10.30-10.45		Coffee break			
10.45-12.15	13	Meeting with ONA2	SoeS INSEE	S. Moreau, G. Mordant, R. Depoutot, S. Grégoir, B. Rouppert	
12.15-13.15	14	Cooperation / level of integration in the ESS	INSEE	J.L. Tavernier, S. Grégoir, B. Rouppert	
13.15-14.00		Lunch			
14.00-15.30	15	Programming, planning and resources, including training (CoP principles 3, 9 and 10)	INSEE	C. Gonzalez-Demichel, A. Jacquot, M. Desmotes-Mainard, B. Rouppert	
15.30-15.45		Coffee break			
15.45-17.00	16	Meeting with Junior staff	INSEE	Tristan Picard, Anne Rhodes, Stéphanie Combes	
Day 4 Thursday 11 December 2014					
09.00-10.00	17	Meeting with main users - Media	L'Opinion INSEE	Cyrille Lachèvre, B. Rouppert	
10.00-11.30	18	Quality (organisational structure, tools, monitoring, ...) (CoP principles 4 and 11 to 15)	INSEE	S. Grégoir, B. Rouppert, O. Rascol, S. Lefranc	
11.30-11.45		Coffee break			
11.45-13.15	19	Methodology, data collection, data processing and administrative data (CoP principles 2, 7 and 8)	INSEE	O. Sautory, J. Khélif, N. Roth, S. Lefranc, B. Rouppert	
13.15-14.00		Lunch			
14.00-15.30	20	Meeting with data providers	DG-FIP ACOSS INSEE	L. Aeberhardt, P. Harymbat, G. Forgeot, E. Walraet, B. Rouppert	
15.30-17.00	21	Clarifications, remaining or additional issues and focus areas	INSEE	S. Grégoir, B. Rouppert	
Day 5 Friday 12 December 2014					
09.00-10.45	22	PR team discussion			
10.45-11.00		Coffee break			
11.00-13.00	23	Meeting with senior management: conclusions and recommendations	INSEE	Executive Rouppert	Committee, B.

ANNEX B - LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

	Peer Review Team
1	O'HANLON Gerry, Chair
2	SZÉP Katalin, Member
3	VIRDEE Jagdev, Member
	Eurostat observer
4	PONCELET Jean-Pierre, Head of Unit, Government finance statistics and quality, Eurostat
	NSI management
5	TAVERNIER Jean-Luc, General Director
6	CUNEO Philippe, Head of the General Inspectorate
7	GREGOIR Stéphane, Head of the Directorate of Methodology, Statistical Coordination and International Relations
8	LEFEBVRE Olivier, Deputy Secretary General for IT
9	LENGLART Fabrice, Head of the Directorate of Demographic and Social Statistics
10	MAUREL Françoise, Head of the Directorate of Dissemination and Regional Operation
11	DEPOUTOT Raoul, Head of the Statistical Coordination Division
12	OLIER Lucile, Head of the Dissemination Division
13	BRUNET François, Head of the INSEE-Info-Service Division
14	GONZALEZ-DEMICHEL Christine, Head of the Financial Affairs & Planning of Work and Resources Division
15	JACQUOT Alain, Head of the Software development and Projects Division
16	DEMOTES-MANARD Magali, Head of the Human Resources Development Division
17	SAUTORY Olivier, Head of the Statistical Methods Division
18	ROTH Nicole, Head of the Employment and Earnings division
19	ESCAPA Caroline, Head of the Demography Division
20	KHELIF Johara, Head of the Annual Business Statistics Compilation Section
21	ISNARD Michel, Head of the Legal Affairs and Litigation Section
	National coordinator team
22	ROUPPERT Benoît, Head of the Quality Unit
23	RASCOL Odile, Deputy Head of the Quality Unit

24	LEFRANC Sylvie, Quality unit
	Other NSI staff members
25	CHRISTINE Marc, Label Committee Rapporteur
26	RHODES Anne, National Accounts Division
27	COMBES Stéphanie, Statistical Methods Division
28	PICARD Tristan, Sectoral Economic Outlooks Division
	ONAs
29	SEDILLOT Béatrice, Head of the Ministerial Statistical Department of Agriculture
30	MOREAU Sylvain, Head of the Ministerial Statistical Department of Sustainable Development
31	MORDANT Guillaume, Deputy Head of the Ministerial Statistical Department of Sustainable Development
	NSGAB
32	CHAMPSAUR Paul, President of the NSGAB
	Representatives of main users
33	OUNG Vichett, Head of the Short term Economic Diagnosis Division, Banque de France
34	FRIEZ Adrien, Head of the Ministerial Statistical Department of Civil Service
35	AUDIBERT Pierre, General Secretary of the NSAC
	Representatives of media
36	LACHEVRE Cyrille, L'Opinion
	Representatives of main data providers/respondents
37	AEBERHARDT Lorraine, Head of the Ministerial Statistical Department of Public Finance
38	FORGEOT Gérard, Ministerial Statistical Department of Public Finance
39	HARYMBAT Pierre, Directorate General of Public Finance
40	WALRAET Emmanuelle, Head of the Statistical Division of ACOSS (Social Security)
	Representatives of the scientific community
41	FRACHOT Antoine, Head of GENES
42	GADOUCHE Kamel, Director of CASD
43	SILBERMAN Roxane, Centre Quetelet, General Secretary of the Comité de Concertation pour les Données en SHS (CCDSHS)
44	BOZIO Antoine, Institute for Fiscal Studies