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Staidrimh

Central  
Statistics  
Office

# An ethical approach to the development of social acceptance & its application

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# Development of Data ethics- key enabler of social acceptance

- Paper developed by Expert Group on ESS Strategic Consultation
- Led by Ireland, Canada and the UK in consultation with Eurostat
- Themes
  - Legal access not enough- higher standard of social acceptance
  - Using an ethical lens to create trust
  - Proactive role in communicating this to society
  - Proactive role in leading on data ethics



# Social Acceptance...

## What do we mean?

- Gaining and retaining society's approval for our work
- Retaining trust to use data to provide statistics and services for the public good and in the public interest
- A standard beyond mere compliance with personal data protection laws and beyond legislation governing statistical organisations
- Using data in an ethical way, embedding ethical considerations into statistical production and organisational processes

## Remember

- A legal right to data is not the same as having the social approval to use the data



# Why now?

## We have been focusing on

- Increasing use of secondary (admin and privately held) data
- Growing demand for better and more timely insights from users
- Legal compliance in accessing data

## We also need to consider

- Changing social attitudes to privacy; loss of trust and fake news
- Increasing public awareness of data volumes and linkage opportunities
- Growing data ethics discussions
- Potential of increased access to privately held data i.e. EU Regulation 223 revision



# Building social acceptance of our work

- **Trust**
  - Key to all that we do
  - Trust is earned not built and can be lost very easily
  - Achieved trust through **living and demonstrating our values**
- **Ethics**
  - Changing times require a new enabler of trust: Ethics
  - Moving towards using ethics to build social acceptance for our work
  - Application of ethical considerations can provide evidence on which to build trust

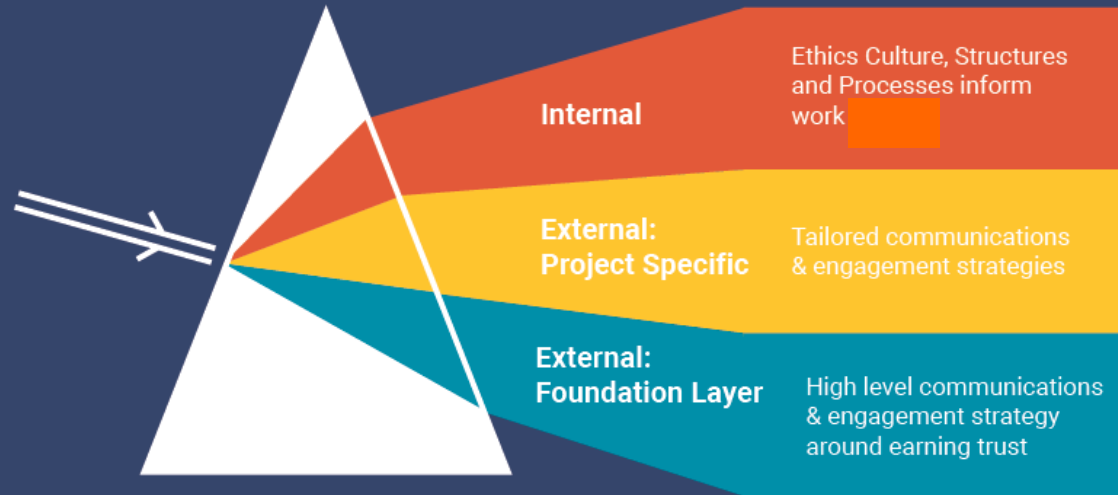


# Use of an ethical lens

- It might be legal BUT is it seen as **right or wrong** and who decides this?
- How can we apply an ethical lens to our organisations to gather the **evidence** of our trustworthiness?
- How can we build ethics into our data processes?
  - Design, build, collection, processing, analysis and communication in both survey and administrative data
- We also need to **listen, understand, and communicate** clearly what we are doing and why – we need communications and engagement strategies



## An Ethical Lens...





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# Learning from the Canadian and UK experiences





# Canadian approach to building trust

- Created a high-powered **Data Ethics Secretariat** within Stats Canada
- Adopted a **Necessity and Proportionality Framework**
- Every proposal for a new project or data acquisition must explain
  - why it is important,
  - what the **benefits** are to Canadians,
  - who needs the information and
  - address ethical considerations such as privacy, transparency, and fairness.
- Developed a comprehensive **Trust Centre** on the website
- Framework for Responsible Use of Machine Learning developed based on respect for people, respect for data, sound methods and sound applications



# UK- developing a data ethics culture

- Developed a set of ethical principles for research where using the data
  - Has clear benefits for users and serves the public good **while**
  - Protecting the data subject's identity, keeping the information confidential and secure, and respecting consent
  - Complying with all relevant legal requirements
  - Considering the risks and limits of new technologies and ensuring sufficient human oversight so that methods employed are consistent with recognised standards of integrity and quality and
  - Ensuring that the access, use and sharing of data is transparent, and is communicated clearly
- Embedded data ethics in statistical culture by
  - Providing high quality training to support analysts' use of the principles
  - Developing a self assessment ethical tool to enable analysts quickly assess their project
  - Being prominent and vocal in shaping the culture and developing evidence of the use of data ethics





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# Applying the ethical lens to your own organisation

# Key takeaways from their experiences...

- **Don't assume** because you have done it before, that it is accepted
- Leverage the idea of the **public good**
- Harness the persuasive power of **what's in it for me – and what's in it for society**
- Develop **proactive communications** and engagement regarding Trust



# Ethics as an enabler of trust

## 1. Internal Focus:

- Develop an Ethical Framework and **evaluate** how mature your organisation is
- **Embed ethics** in your business processes and organisational culture
- Compile the **evidence** of your ethical approach by developing demonstration projects

## 2. External Focus:

- Develop a high level communication and engagement strategy around earning trust
- Develop developing tailored communications & engagement strategies and **audience-specific messaging** around the purpose and value of our work
- Lead on the development of an ethical data culture in the broader research and statistical communities
- Consider key audiences e.g. data suppliers, general public, media, decision makers, Data Commissioner, interested parties etc...



# How can we

- Develop a broad framework that defines what NSIs could consider when considering data ethics?
- Develop ways of embedding that framework within the statistical production process so that data ethics happens in practice?
- Communicate this work to different audiences so that data ethics can be an enabler of social acceptability?





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# Application in Ireland



# Ethics in Frameworks for Decision Making

- **Clear Corporate Governance Framework** guiding statistical program with emphasis on ethics, purpose and proportionality
- New **Senior Management Group** committee on Ethics Development
- Participation in and alignment to international discussions on **best practices**
- **Liaison/steering group structure** for engagement with external stakeholders on key releases such as Sexual Violence Survey or Growing Up in Ireland
- **Census Advisory Group** to inform Census questions





# Trust & Communications

- **New Trust section on CSO website** outlining what the CSO does and how we do it:
  - Key themes of: data collection; data protection; data ethics; confidentiality; and transparency
- **Redoubling focus on trust** in external communications including on utilisation of administrative data
  - Count on Us marketing campaign
  - Stakeholder engagement
- **Alignment of external and internal** communications messaging

