

Official statistics in tune with users: heading for 2028!

The National Council for Statistical Information (CNIS) is responsible for ensuring dialogue between users and producers of official statistics. In order to identify new information needs and user concerns, every five years the CNIS carries out a prospective analysis of the needs to be covered in the medium term. Such an exercise was carried out in 2023 and led to the definition of a programme for the CNIS covering the period 2024-2028. Among the major areas of development on the CNIS agenda one can highlight the monitoring of the ecological transition, which requires a paradigm shift and a multi-faceted approach, and monitoring inequalities in all their components (income and wealth, access to public services, transmission of inequalities, territorial inequalities, etc.), as well as mobilising new sources of administrative and private data or matching data sources.

On 24 January 2024, the CNIS plenary assembly officially adopted its 2024-2028 programme. This medium-term programme, defined for a five-year period, plays an important role in the CNIS functioning and the work programme of official statistics producers. Through the recommendations it issues for each thematic committee¹, it guides its work and those of the associated producer services; it fosters exchanges between producers and users of official statistics on topics chosen in a concerted manner; it also makes it possible to create synergies between producer services around common themes and encourages dialogue between producers of private data and those of official statistics.

The preparation of the medium-term programme is a special moment in the life of the CNIS insofar as it fosters dialogue between the various players in official statistics, and encourages users, whether informed users or the general public, to express their needs through various channels. It is also a time to look back over the past five years and draw lessons from the implementation of the programme that is coming to an end.

The programme drawn up for the 2024-2028 period reflects the economic and social context and the major transformations in our society. The ecological transition plays a key role in this and will be addressed in its various dimensions

¹ CNIS has 7 thematic committees dealing with demographics and social issues, employment and income, public services, the environment, the economy (business and market strategies, financial system and financing of the economy) and territories. In addition, there is a committee that is not open to the public: The Population Census Evaluation Committee.



in the work of most of the committees. Users are also looking for reliable statistical information on subjects that are hotly debated in society: inflation and its impact on purchasing power and living standards, and developments in inequalities. It also reflects the deep-seated societal changes generated or accelerated by the health crisis, such as the development of teleworking.

The programme also reflects the major changes in the organisation of official statistics that have been made necessary and encouraged by the health crisis: the implementation of innovative methods to guarantee the production of fundamental statistics, greater flexibility in processes and greater responsiveness to document emerging phenomena that affect economic and social life. This responsiveness must be combined with the long timeframe of statistics, which sometimes takes several years to see an operation through to completion. It is to this apparently contradictory injunction that the medium-term programme must respond: on the one hand, continuing to investigate long-term subjects (such as inequalities, for example) and, on the other hand, adapting to integrate the urgent demands made on official statistics.

Themes favoured by users that reflect the concerns of producers

Numerous consultations and dialogue sessions have led to the selection of themes that feed into the recommendations of the thematic committees and, in the case of the most emblematic ones, are taken up in the general recommendations. Several themes deserve to be highlighted from different angles: the territorial approach, inequalities, the ecological transition and the digital transformation.

The territorial approach covers supranational and sub-national dimensions, which deal with different issues but are equally important. On the one hand, the aim is to place French statistics in an international

Graph: themes highlighted in the public consultation



perspective, to compare our methods and the statistics we produce with those of our partners, to export our best practices and draw inspiration from those of other countries, but also to observe a globalised economy. European statistics occupy a special place in this respect, since official statistics must comply with European regulations, but also because the national statistical institutes of the Member States are privileged partners for comparing methods and results, and a source of emulation for official statistics producers.

On the other hand, the aim is to improve the comparability of data between territories, to move away from administrative breakdowns towards statistics at finer territorial scales based on ad hoc breakdowns, and to make better use of the statistics produced by local authorities. For example, for certain themes such as inflation and purchasing power, biodiversity, the environment or health, an analysis at national level is too global and does not meet the demand for observation of disparities between territories. The medium-term programme suggests tackling these issues from a sub-national territorial angle.

Inequalities, which have been the focus of attention in previous CNIS medium-term programmes, remain a topical issue, even though some progress has been made, such as the more systematic documentation of gender inequalities. The 2024-2028 programme proposes to approach this theme from new angles: on the one hand, the aim is to report on the progress made in taking inequalities into account in the national accounts through the distributed household accounts, and to encourage the continuation of this work. On the other hand, inequalities will also be explored from the point of view of how they are passed on from one generation to the next, as well as inequalities in access to public services and the cumulative effect of different types of inequality for certain groups.

The ecological transition will be approached from the angle of biodiversity, water resources, sobriety, measuring the energy renovation of buildings, the impact of mobilities on CO2 emissions, the links between socio-economic inequalities and climate change and finally the link between health and the environment. It will also be a matter

of documenting the unequal impact of the ecological transition on households according to their lifestyle, income and living conditions, monitoring the environmental skills needed in connection with the adaptation of professions towards 'green' professions, shedding light on the role of businesses in the ecological transition, observing the transformations of the agricultural system and agri-food industries, measuring the financial risks linked to climate change, and observing the vulnerability of territories. Putting these different aspects together, like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, will give a good picture of the impact of the ecological transition on all aspects of economic and social life.

At the crossroads of ecological transition and inequalities, the 2024-2028 programme provides a forum for the official statistical service, and INSEE in particular, to regularly present innovative work on 'augmented' national accounts that take account of environmental degradation (measurement of the carbon footprint) and income distribution (distributional accounts by household category).

Digital transformation is also a major phenomenon likely to radically change the economy and society, as well as the way statistics are produced. The themes of the digital gap, changing consumption patterns, digital skills, new forms of employment linked to digital development, the contribution of digital technology to growth and the development of fintech will be addressed to enrich statistical information on this subject.

In addition to the organisational changes it has brought about in the official statistical system, the health crisis has also brought to the spotlight certain themes which are reflected in the CNIS programme. The first of these is health, which will be addressed from the angle of inequalities in health, disability in relation to working conditions, the link between health and the environment, and the supply and quality of the healthcare system. The treatment of this theme will give rise to a specific consultation

of the various stakeholders and will be in line with the European work being carried out on this subject.

The theme of Youth was also brought to the fore by the health crisis. This topic will be explored from the angle of analysing young people's pathways through the education system and their integration into the professional world, their living conditions and income, and also the pathways of young people in trouble with the law.

At the other end of the age scale, the elderly will also be the focus of particular attention, whether in terms of documenting their living conditions⁰ and income levels, the transition from employment to retirement and the work of older people, or the care of the elderly by public policies.

The health crisis has amplified emerging phenomena in the organisation of work, such as the introduction of teleworking and digital platforms, as well as the mobility of people and the residential trajectories of households, all of which represent major challenges for regional planning.

A multi-faceted focus on public services will document inequalities in access to public services, staff working conditions and local public services, and consideration will be given to the introduction of public service quality indicators. Producer departments from ministries in contact with the public (health, education, justice, internal security, etc.) will be asked to work in synergy to contribute to the debate on these different dimensions of the quality of public services and to respond to strong social demand.

New themes have arisen, or themes that have not been addressed for a long time within the CNIS. This is the case for the abuse of vulnerable people, on which the CNIS has already begun to focus by setting up a working group that brings together stakeholders in the sector, data users and data producers. In the social field, the aim will also be to gain a better understanding

of the world of "care" from different angles: family carers, personal services and individual employers. In the field of economic statistics, it will be dealt with the implementation of the new French economic classification, NAF2025, from the point of view of its impact on economic statistics and the blue economy (linked to the sea), the monitoring of which requires the harmonisation of data that is often scattered and work to measure its scope.

Beyond these themes, the medium-term programme also reflects the range of services offered by the official statistical system, the multiplicity of existing sources, be they survey sources, administrative sources or private data, the need to improve their quality, to combine them, or even to create new sources of information ex nihilo. More than ever, it stresses the need for producers of official statistics or alternative data to coordinate their efforts, as well as the need for better communication on existing statistics. Two general recommendations therefore focus on the method and propose a framework for the use of new sources of data, particularly private data, and a code of ethics for the matching of individual data to ensure a high level of security, respect for ethical principles and good public information, following on from the recommendations of the consultation group on the project for a statistical register of individuals and dwellings (Résil). The latest recommendation responds to a strong demand from users for better guidance in finding their way around the range of official statistics on offer, and suggests that efforts to educate users should be continued.

A programme by and for users

The preparation of the medium-term programme is designed to give a voice to all the stakeholders who regularly feed into the debates and reflections conducted by the CNIS, the 'informed' users of official statistics (institutional users representing ministries, high councils, local public bodies, trade



Themes dealt with in the focus group on ecological transition	Proposed angles	Recommendations that follow focus group suggestions
Biodiversity	Biodiversity Indicators – assess the current situation - establish long series	Monitoring biodiversity
Biomass	Unifying concepts and methods for measuring biomass	
Water	Set up indicators to monitor water extraction and consumption	Documenting changes in water resources
Sobriety		How can sobriety be measured?
Territorial indicators	Need for indicators at local or EPCI* level	Monitoring the vulnerability of territories to the consequences of climate and environmental change
Activities and businesses	Carbon balances: which ecological monitoring indicator is right for a small business? Resource flow data (energy, materials)	Clarify the role of businesses in the ecological transition (environmental impacts, economic costs and benefits)
Buildings	Building renovation indicators	Measuring the energy renovation of buildings
Cross-disciplinarity	Introduce an environmental module in major surveys	

* Public inter-communal cooperation body.

unions, associations, researchers and academics) and the producers of official statistics or alternative data; the preparation of the medium-term programme is also open to the general public through a public consultation on the Internet.

A collaborative approach was favoured whatever the consultation or consultation methods chosen: face-to-face interviews, public consultation or focus group meetings.

Public consultation, a mode of consultation that was successfully inaugurated during the preparation of the 2019-2023 programme, was once again put forward,

allowing a wide audience to express their needs in terms of statistics. Those who so wished were contacted again and invited to discuss their requests in greater depth in focus groups on the themes of ecological transition and social statistics, which brought together users and producers of statistics. These more targeted discussions in small groups brought out issues that are the subject of committee recommendations or general recommendations. The needs of users compared with the plans of producers showed that on certain subjects, information exists, but that users are not aware of it. It is therefore the communication of statistics that needs to be developed.

The 2024-2028 programme has also been analysed from the point of view of European statistics as a user of official statistics but also as a producer and coordinator of the work of the national statistical institutes. Several of the themes in the CNIS medium-term programme correspond to priorities in Eurostat's multi-annual work programme (e.g. health, employment of platforms, local indicators for public action, etc.).

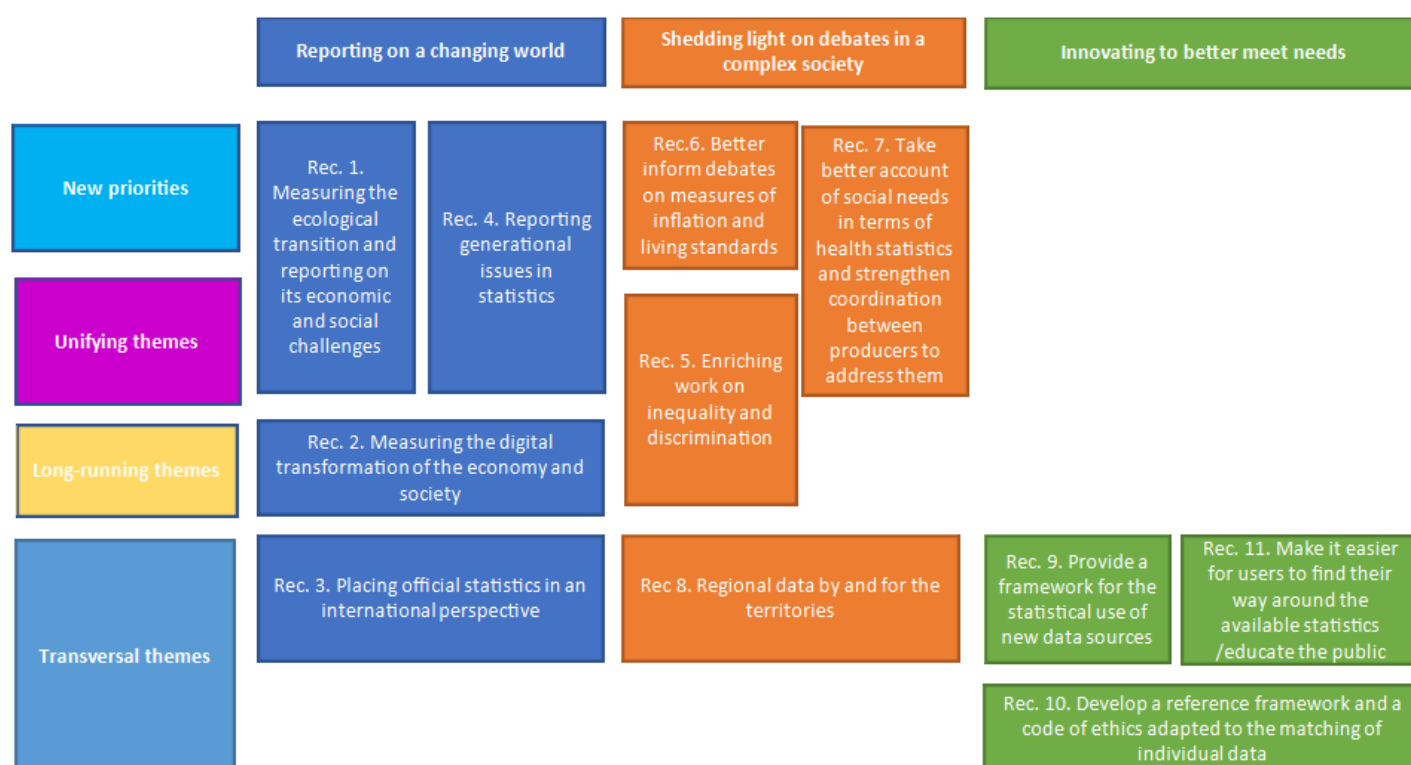
Linking general and thematic committee recommendations: encouraging synergies between producers

The 2024-2028 programme is structured around a number of general recommendations, which are cross-cutting by nature, and recommendations dealt with by the thematic committees. The general recommendations are grouped under three main headings: reporting on a changing world, enlightening debates in a complex society and innovating to better meet needs. They respond to several priorities: to identify unifying themes that will be supported by the work of several commissions, to provide a forum for new priorities, to focus on themes that deserve long-term attention and, finally, to emphasise the cross-cutting dimensions of official statistics (access to data and matching for production, the geographical dimension and dissemination to users).

The preparation of the 2024-2028 programme has highlighted a number of fundamental themes that require further consideration, the most important of which is the ecological transition. For example, the theme of people's mobility will be examined from the angle of the CO2 emissions generated by mobilities, but also from the point of view of the regional planning issues linked to these mobilities.

The ecological transition has already been the subject of a seminar in 2023, which explored the statistical measurement issues it raises. All in all, most of the CNIS thematic committees (first and foremost the Environment and Sustainable Development

Classification of general recommendations by objective :



Thematic committees meetings	Working groups	Seminars/conferences
Each committee meets twice a year	Ad-hoc set-up for a short period (usually one year)	One or two seminars per year
1 medium-term recommendation discussed at each meeting Sources overview Recent work and challenges faced by producers	Exploring new subjects Bringing together stakeholders, producers and users.	Take stock of a major theme of interest or of advances in statistical data production (new data sources, cohort monitoring, matching).
Users share their experience of using statistics	"Knowledgeable" users are invited to take part in the working groups	Users share their experience of using statistics
Users express their needs	Users are involved in developing the statistical offer	Users can express their opinions
Indication of the next steps for the topic in question	WG recommendations to be included in the producers' work programme	Conclusions addressed to producers

Committee) will be helping to shed light on this fundamental change from various angles in the years ahead.

The medium-term programme: an agenda designed to evolve over time

The general and committee recommendations resulting from the consultations and dialogue feed into the work of the CNIS various bodies: meetings of the thematic committees, but also ad hoc working groups and seminars. In particular, the working groups enable in-depth dialogue on innovative subjects or subjects requiring specific attention. The table below details the different ways in which the programme is implemented, how users of official statistics are involved and can express their needs in all the events dealing with the themes of the medium-term programme, and how this work feeds into long-term thinking.



In this way, the CNIS medium-term programme, as it is implemented, is designed to evolve to meet the needs of users. It is itself enriched by the ideas generated by the work of the committees and working groups, as well as by ad hoc consultations, but it also leaves room for the unexpected to cover emerging issues. This work is always endorsed by conclusions that can be acted upon quickly, while others can be dealt with at a later date (this is the long-term nature of statistics). The producer services usually come back to the CNIS on issues that have already been addressed in committee and where significant progress has been made that should be brought to the attention of stakeholders. ■ ■ ■

Dominique Francoz

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