Rivista di statistica ufficiale/Review of official statistics

CODE OF ETHICS

(Updated as of 31st January 2023)

Preface

The *Rivista di statistica ufficiale/Review of Official Statistics* (p-ISSN 1828-1982; e-ISSN 1972-4829), registered at the Court of Rome (N. 339/2007 of 19 July 2007) and published in English on a four-monthly basis by the Italian National Institute of Statistics – Istat (https://www.istat.it/en/analysis-and-products/publications/review-of-official-statistics), endorses and complies with the current guidelines established by the Committee on Publication Ethics – COPE, to guarantee an ethical workflow for the publication of its scientific articles.

All the committees and representatives of the *Rivista di statistica ufficiale/Review of official statistics*, that is the Editor-in-chief, the members of the Scientific Committee, and the Editorial Board, therefore, act in accordance with the recommendations of COPE, ensure recommended good practice, and adopt whatever relevant measures against malpractice and abuse for every step of the publication process.

In particular, all persons involved in the process – Editor-in-chief, Editorial Board, Authors, and Referees – are assumed to know and share the following ethical principles, as well as data protection rules. Periodical reviews (on a four-monthly basis) are scheduled to assess compliance with the editorial process and to assess continuous improvement of the workflow.

Advertising: Istat is a public research body and according to its institutional policy does not manage or publish advertising.

Fees: no form of payment is required to publish in the *Rivista di statistica ufficiale/Review of official statistics*.

The *Rivista* is open access, is distributed completely free of charge on the Istat website, and can be downloaded and circulated anywhere.

Obligations of the Editor-in-chief and the Editorial Board

- Decisions on publication
  - The Editor-in-chief, with the support of the Editorial Board, is responsible for deciding whether or not to publish articles submitted to the *Rivista di statistica ufficiale/Review of official statistics* on the basis of a double-anonymised Peer review (moving to triple), conducted by expert Referees.
  - These Referees, joining the Expert Referee Network of the Italian National Institute of Statistics - Istat as members, are external to both the Editorial Board and the Scientific Committee.
  - In its decisions, the Editorial Board is bound to respect the strategies and editorial approach of the *Rivista*. It is also bound by the legal provisions in force, concerning defamation, copyright infringement, and plagiarism.

- Fairness and non-discrimination
  - The Editor-in-chief and the Editorial Board – after checking with the Scientific Committee - decide exclusively on the scientific value, relevance, and originality of the article content proposed for publication without discrimination based on gender, gender identity and orientation, age, origin, citizenship, religion, and political orientation of the Authors.

- Confidentiality, conflict of interest, and prohibition of use or disclosure
  - The Editor-in-chief and the Editorial Board are committed not to disclose information on articles proposed for publication to persons other than the Author/s, the Referees, and the Publisher (the Italian National Institute of Statistics - Istat), or printer, and do not use the contents of unpublished articles for their own research without the express written consent of the Author/s.

- Double-anonymised Peer review process
  - The *Rivista di statistica ufficiale/Review of official statistics* applies a double-anonymised Peer review process to ensure that submitted material remains strictly confidential throughout the review and assessment process.
  - The Editor-in-chief and the Editorial Board identify expert, competent and reliable Referees, thus ensuring a proper evaluation of articles to be published.
  - The double-anonymised Peer review process is currently undergoing changes to achieve a triple-anonymised Peer review.

- Composition and competences of the Editorial Board
  - The Editorial Board is composed of a Coordinator and 35 Members: all of them are Istat employees since the publisher is Istat.
  - The Editorial Board Members are experts in the different fields covered by the *Rivista*.
  - Six of the 35 members are also part of the Technical-Scientific Secretariat of the Editorial Board, with the task of planning and coordination.
  - The Editorial Board thus contributes to the mission and vision of the Italian National Institute of Statistics - Istat and guarantees as well transparent activity and fewer possibilities of conflict of interest.
  - Should a component of the Editorial Board propose an article, she/he will undergo the same procedure and workflow as other Authors.

Authors' obligations about the articles submitted to the *Rivista di statisticaufficiale/Review of official statistics*

- Scientific originality
  - The Author compiles and signs a written form (the affiliation form) guaranteeing that the article submitted for evaluation (via email at the institutional address rivista@istat.it) is unpublished, scientifically original, and not submitted simultaneously to other journals, volumes, or periodicals.
  - For further publication of the article, the *Rivista* should be directly contacted through the proposing Author to make an independent assessment of this proposal (based on the value of the Journal or volume).
  - The Author has also to cite adequately all texts used, following the editorial guidelines given for publication in the *Rivista di statistica ufficiale/Review of official statistics*, taking care that the articles/papers and/or words of other Authors are adequately reported/paraphrased or exactly quoted with the correct sources.
  - Authors are requested to follow the editorial guidelines of the *Rivista di statistica ufficiale/Review of official statistics* and to refer to The University of Chicago's *Manual of Style* for citations and bibliographical references.
  - Authors may under no circumstances submit the same article in another language claiming it is original.

- Linguistic quality
  - The Author guarantees a high linguistic quality of the content in English (British English).
  - Poor linguistic quality is a reason hindering publication.

- Revision of the article
  - Articles submitted by the Authors undergo a process of careful anonymisation by the Technical-Scientific Secretariat of the Editorial Board so that Referees cannot link them with the Authors.
  - All relevant documents accompanying each article are then submitted to the reviewers anonymously.
  - Attention is also paid to previous publications by the same Author, whose bibliographical references must appear anonymously.
  - The Editor-in-chief and the Editorial Board ask the Authors for any corrections and integrations deemed appropriate, also following the anonymous evaluation by the Referees. The above-mentioned anonymous evaluation is sent to the Authors through the evaluation form filled in by the Referees.
  - After receiving the first round double-anonymised reports, the Authors may express their observations or objection. They will be examined by the Editor-in-chief together with the Editorial Board, who may transmit them to the Referees when the Authors' inquiry concern scientific/content aspects of the article.
  - The Editorial Board reserves the right to make purely editorial changes after the corrections of the various drafts, to comply with the editorial guidelines of the publication of the *Rivista di statistica ufficiale/Review of official statistics*, so as to make the article homogeneous.

- Authors and Affiliation
  - The affiliation of the Authors should be stated clearly by completing and signing the relevant form.
  - Having a unique identifier as Author - *e.g.* ORCID - is highly favoured by the *Rivista*

since it permits a wider circulation of the article and a simpler way of cross-referencing for Authors and articles.
- In case the article has multiple Authors, a Corresponding Author should be indicated with her/his affiliation (with full address or unique identifier, *e.g.* ORCID).
- All persons who have made a significant contribution to the production of the article must appear as Co-authors.
- Significant contributions to certain stages of the research by other researchers need to be explicitly acknowledged.
- In the case of multiple contributions, the parts of each Author/Co-author can be clearly indicated, otherwise, the article is considered to be the result of the joint work of all Co-authors.

- Conflicts of interest
  - The Authors must not have any conflicts of interest that might have influenced the results obtained, the theses argued, or the interpretations proposed.
  - The Authors must also indicate any financial sponsors of funding the research or project from which the article derives.

- Addressing inaccuracies in scientific articles
  - If the Author identifies a relevant error or inaccuracy in one of her/his articles after publication, she/he must promptly inform the *Rivista di statistica ufficiale/Review of official statistics* and provide all necessary indications for the required changes to be reported at the bottom or in the appendix of the article.
  - She/he must also correct the manuscript by actively collaborating with the Editorial Board, even if the report comes from the Editor-in-chief or the Editorial Board of the *Rivista* unless agreed with the latter.
  - The inaccuracy/error/misprint shall be clearly indicated on the relevant page of the issue.
  - The Editor-in-chief, together with the Scientific Committee, can decide to publish a rectification or statement in case an article turns out not to be original, or in any other case of serious infringements or malpractices.

- Fees
  - No fees or payments are requested for the Authors to process and then publish their work after the double-anonymised Peer review process is successfully completed.

- Authors' self-archiving
  - The Authors can deposit their articles already published in the *Rivista di statistica ufficiale/Review of official statistics* in their institutional repository, appropriately giving written notice to the Editorial Board of the *Rivista*, explicitly acknowledging that it is uploaded unchanged.
  - The Authors can deposit their articles in well-known Research repositories directly linking to the *Rivista* website, or identifying it with its DOI, or linking directly to their articles.

Referees' obligations

- Supporting the editorial decision
  - Peer review is a procedure that supports the *Rivista di statistica ufficiale/Review of official statistics* in evaluating the scientific quality of the proposed articles and also allows the Author to improve her/his contribution.
  - Referees (at least two for each scientific article) are selected from outside the Editorial Board and the Scientific Committee of the *Rivista di statistica ufficiale/Review of official statistics*, as experts/referents in the fields covered in the publication proposals.
  - Referees are notified through official communications (via email from the institutional address: rivista@istat.it).
  - Referees agree both to contribute anonymously and to join the Expert Referee Network of the Italian National Institute of Statistics - Istat, on a voluntary basis and free of charge.
  - Referees have to assess the integrity of the research published by completing the *ad hoc* evaluation form.
  - Referees assessing linguistic quality and clarity are also included in the evaluation process.

- Timeliness and meeting the deadlines
  - A maximum period of 60 working days from the proposal to the article's positive evaluation is intended. After the evaluation process, the article will be published in the first planned issue of the *Rivista di statistica ufficiale/Review of official statistics*. In this period several steps occur.
  - Scientific papers proposed for publication follow the evaluation process with double-anonymised approach and consists of several phases.
  - During the first phase, the evaluation process lasts between two and five weeks: the manuscript is sent separately and anonymised to two reviewers who work separately but in the same time span completing their assignments, using the *ad hoc* evaluation form.
  - After the first round, the anonymised evaluation forms by the two Referees come back to the editorial team that checks the reviewers' requests and transmits them to the Authors for amendments and clarifications until everything is finalised.
  - Communications with the Authors are managed at the Editorial Board level, until final publication, should the entire process result in a positive decision.
  - Referees selected for the anonymised process, who think they are not suitable or lack expertise for the task of reviewing a specific topic, or who believe they are unable to respect the deadlines, are required to notify the Editor-in-chief and the Editorial Board as soon as possible (for a quick substitution).

- Fairness and objectivity
  - The Peer review must be conducted in a fair and objective way.
  - The Referees should figure out the Authors' claim when writing the article, thus fairly assessing the structure and content, as detailed below.
  - Referees are asked to justify their evaluations of the anonymised article in an appropriate and documented way, by filling in the dedicated evaluation form.
  - Any personal judgment on Authors is inappropriate: criticism or insults to Authors (who remain anonymous) are not allowed.
  - Comments must be appropriately formulated and cannot be intended as a criticism of an ideological nature or, in any case, containing scientific-cultural assumptions of a personal nature.

  - Each statement, observation, or argument reported should preferably be accompanied by a corresponding quotation and/or documentation.
- Possible indication of bibliographical reference texts
  - Referees are asked to precisely indicate those bibliographical references that may have been purposely overlooked by Authors in the article under evaluation so as to avoid detecting analogies with others articles having similar contents.
  - All relevant literature must be quoted in the article to be scientifically relevant.

- Plagiarism
  - Referees should also highlight any similarities or overlaps of the article under evaluation with other previously published works, also making use of *ad hoc* software.
  - Referees should report in their assessment forms other cases connected with plagiarism at different levels, such as repetition of parts from a previous article (probably from the same Author), quotations without correct sources, making as if they were new and from the proposing Author; paraphrasing texts without correct sources; data presented without correct sources (even in the form of a data processing activity).

- Conflict of interest and disclosure
  - Scientific papers received for evaluation must be treated as confidential during the evaluation phase. They must not be shown to or discussed with anyone without prior authorisation from the *Rivista di statistica ufficiale/Review of official statistics*.
  - Confidential information or indications obtained during the Peer review process must be treated as such: they may not be used for one's own benefit in any way.
  - Referees are requested not to accept articles for evaluation for which a conflict of interest arises due to previous specific collaborative or competitive relationships with the Authors (even if unknown and anonymous, but who could be identified by deduction) and/or connections with the Authors, Bodies or Institutions related to the scientific work under evaluation.