

Blue Skies Thinking Network (BSTN)

Blue Sky Thinking Network

Collaborative platform for sharing innovative ideas in statistics



The Blue Sky Thinking Network is the “ideas factory” for the statistical modernisation community. The network provides a research and innovation platform where members can share ideas and look for partners to explore how new innovations to our production process can benefit statistical organisations.

The objective of the Blue Skies Thinking Network is to generate and evaluate proposals for HLG-MOS activities and where needed, to do short time boxed follow-up studies. The network will be an umbrella structure for a core group and short-term task teams to investigate new ideas and opportunities through short evaluation projects supported by the HLG-MOS Executive Board. Any idea that is in line with the HLG-MOS Strategic Framework can be considered. To allow for new innovations, space will also be given to out-of-the-box thinking.



Output and Further Information

[The use of machine learning in official statistics \(2018\)](#)

[Telling stories with SDG data Hackathon \(2017\)](#)

Activity and Project Proposals:

- Machine Learning
- Input Privacy-Preservation Techniques
- Data Science Lab
- StatBots
- Synthetic Data Sets

[BST Network Flyer](#)



New activities can be submitted for review (see contact information further below). The Blue Skies Thinking Network will evaluate proposals and the Executive Board of the HLG-MOS will decide what the follow-up activities and next steps will be.

[BST Network Flyer](#)

[Terms of Reference](#)

Contact Information

Innovation Manager:	Barteld Braaksma	bbka at cbs dot nl
Secretariat:	Taeke Gjaltema	taeke.gjaltema at un dot org

Operating Procedures

When new ideas are submitted to the BSTN, following key questions will be expected to be answered by the core group, usually within a couple of months:

- What is the proposal covering?
- What does it mean for official statistics?
- What has already been done?
- What future work is needed?

The core group, jointly with the Executive Board, can then decide:

- Not to pursue, if there is no strong evidence of enough value-added in what is being proposed.
- Put the work on hold, and re-visit it at a specified future time, when the value proposition may be clearer or resources become available.
- Recommend for further work.

If endorsed, the Executive Board will identify how resources can be assigned to follow-up work and what the time lines and deliverables will be. There are several options for advancing the work such as:

- A group of experts is set-up in an ad-hoc fashion under the BSTN to prepare a report or develop a prototype for a given service.
- Two or more NSOs accept to work jointly on the idea to move the agenda further and report back on progress.
- One of the standing Modernisation Groups is asked to include this work in its program (could include re-prioritizing of work if not enough resources are available).
- A project proposal for consideration by HLG-MOS, is prepared by the core team and if needed, a call for additional experts.

The outcomes of these short-term follow-up projects could be the following:

- Not to continue, if there is no strong business case
- A prototype that is of value but does not need follow-up
- To put the work on hold, and re-visit it at a specified future time, when the business case may be clearer

A proposal for further work. This could take the form of a project proposal to be considered for the next year, or a smaller scale activity to be carried out under one of the HLG-MOS groups.

BSTN Core Group

Name	Country
Barteld Braaksma (BSTN manager)	Netherlands
Daniel Elazar	Australia
Kate Burnett-Isaacs	Canada
Jussi Ritola	Finland
Frankie Kay	Ireland
Carlo Vaccari	Italy
Juan Muñoz	Mexico
Gary Dunnet	New Zealand
Branko Josipovic	Serbia
Eric Deeben	UK
Eric Anvar	OECD
Taeke Gjaltema	UNECE
Chris Jones (Secretariat)	UNECE