UNECE Task Force on Population Projections

Preliminary Recommendations and Good Practices: Disseminating Results

Eurostat-UNECE Work Session on Demographic Projections
Geneva, April 20th 2016
Introduction

- Successfully communicating results = key responsibility of projection producers
- NSO and User survey comparisons
  - Frequency of projection updates (frequent enough)
  - Projection horizon (produced versus needed)
  - Language of dissemination (too technical/too simplistic)
  - Aspects of dissemination users would like improved/expanded
  - Elements disseminated versus importance/satisfaction
- Literature review – strategies for communicating science results
Introduction

• Generally, NSOs do understand the areas in which users feel communication of projection results could be improved:
  • Customizable/interactive databases
  • Expanded analysis of the uncertainty of projections
  • Customized disseminations for different types of users
• Users generally satisfied with disseminations but expressed need for more detailed results
  • Greater availability of detailed projection data
  • Greater elaboration of methodology and assumptions
  • More than half of NSO respondents received requests from users for further explanation of projection data, assumptions and methods
Key recommendation

• Provide detailed results

What are the most common requests for technical assistance that you received?
(N=28)

- Explanation of data, assumptions, scenarios/variants or methods/documentation: 50%
- How to access data: 10%
- Requesting more detailed outputs or inputs: 20%
- Seeking advice on which scenario/variant to use: 5%
- Interpreting projection results: 5%
Disseminating results

Good practices

1. Utilize a variety of communication modes and styles to communicate results
2. Introduce information in a progressive manner.
3. Disseminate projection results by single age and year whenever possible
4. Dedicate focus to both short-term and long-term projection results in disseminations
5. Make uncertainty a result in itself
6. Offer customizable/interactive projection data to users in tabular or graphical formats
1. Utilize a variety of communication modes and styles to communicate results
   • In particular, to communicate to non-expert users:
     • Use simple, unambiguous and consistent language
     • Include a glossary with clear definitions of important terminology
     • Include introduction that explains key caveats/limitations
     • Pre-test draft dissemination materials
     • Repeat important messages in various forms (verbal, numeric, graphical)
2. Introduce information in a progressive manner
   • *Progressive Disclosure of Information*
   • Release projection results in several distinct layers (detailed report, press release, shorter summary articles)
   • Provide separate technical report on methods and assumptions
   • General statements about uncertainty should permeate all layers of the results
Disseminating results

3. Disseminate projection results by single age and year whenever possible
   - 84% of respondents to the User Survey felt that obtaining projection results by single year and age was important
Disseminating results

Good practices

4. Provide results for both short-term and long-term horizons
   • The needs of users in regard to projection horizon are varied

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Projection horizon in years</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSO (disseminated) (N=32)</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User (needed) (N=140)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Disseminating results

5. Make uncertainty a result in itself
   • Acknowledge the uncertainty associated with projections
   • Consider the uncertainty an essential key result to be disseminated
6. Offer customizable/interactive projection data to users in tabular or graphical formats
   • Ability to customize table/graphical parameters
   • Ability to select desired combination of projection assumptions to generate custom scenarios
   • Tool to improve user understanding of sensitivity of projections to assumptions
   • Generate new/deeper interest in projections and how they are produced
Example: Statistics Norway