UNECE Task Force on Population Projections

Fostering relationships with users:
Key Recommendations and Good Practices

Eurostat-UNECE Work Session on Demographic Projections

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Introduction

Why fostering relationships with users is important ?

- It provides an opportunity to determine if the communications are well understood and can lead to improvements

- It helps to determine whether the communication approach responds well to the needs of users in general and can trigger important changes in that regard

- It improves the perception in the eyes of users on the projection-maker

Key recommendation:

Fostering relations with the users is in itself a key recommendation !!

Attitudes and actions of the experts working in the NSOs have a large part to play in the communication process as they are the ones entering in contact with the public.

Fostering relationships with users
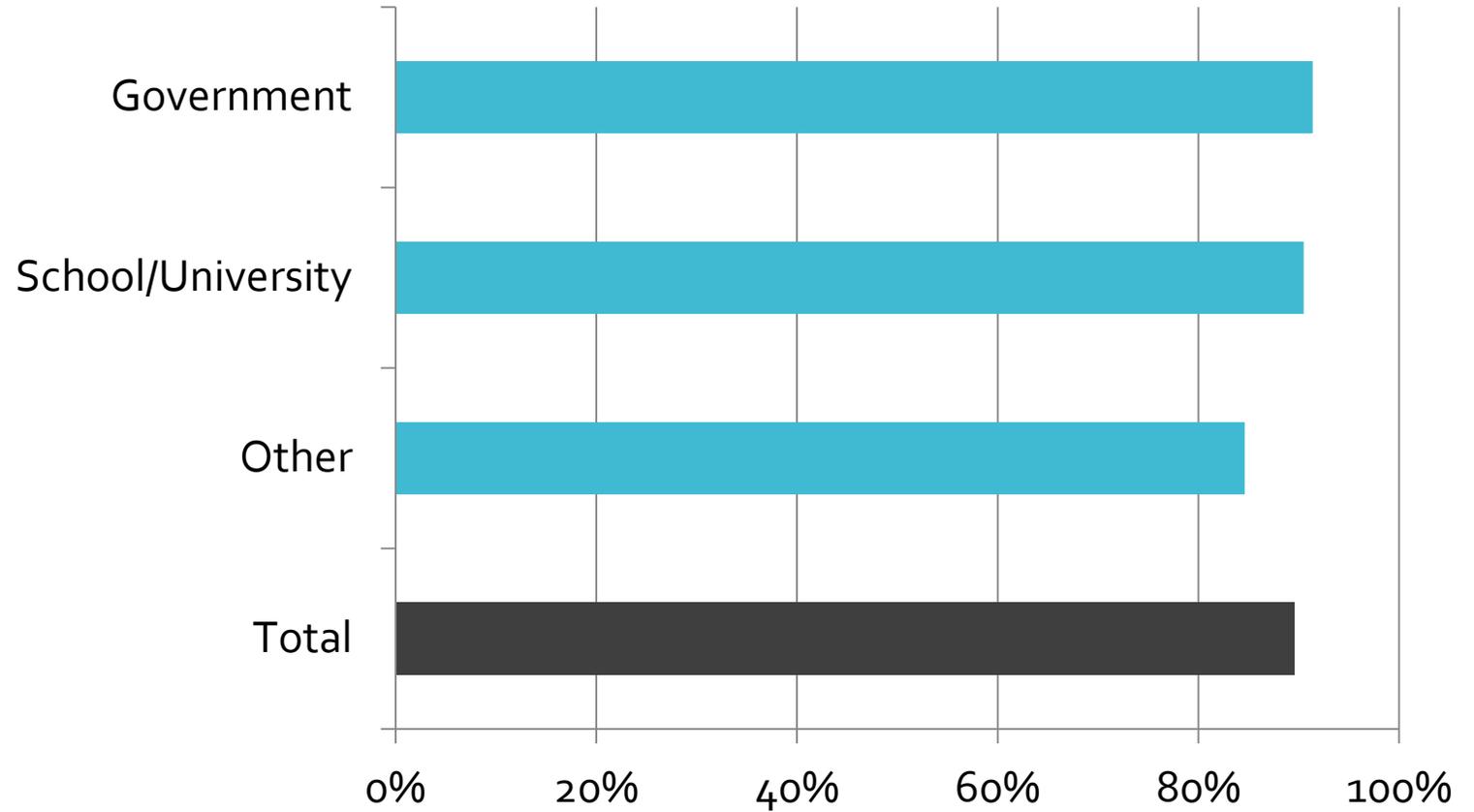
Good practices, an overview

1. Provide a clearly-identifiable means for users to contact projection producers

2. Consider developing and offering "outreach activities" to engage directly with users in a substantive manner

3. Provide notices of forthcoming projection releases to media and frequent projection users

4. Embrace traditional and new media

5. Make electronic dissemination materials accessible and easy to navigate

6. Investigate and document the needs of users

Good practice 1

Provide a clearly-identifiable means for users to contact projection producers

Users who feel they have achieved an adequate response to their request from the NSO (User Survey, N=105)

Good practice 1

Provide a clearly-identifiable means for users to contact projection producers
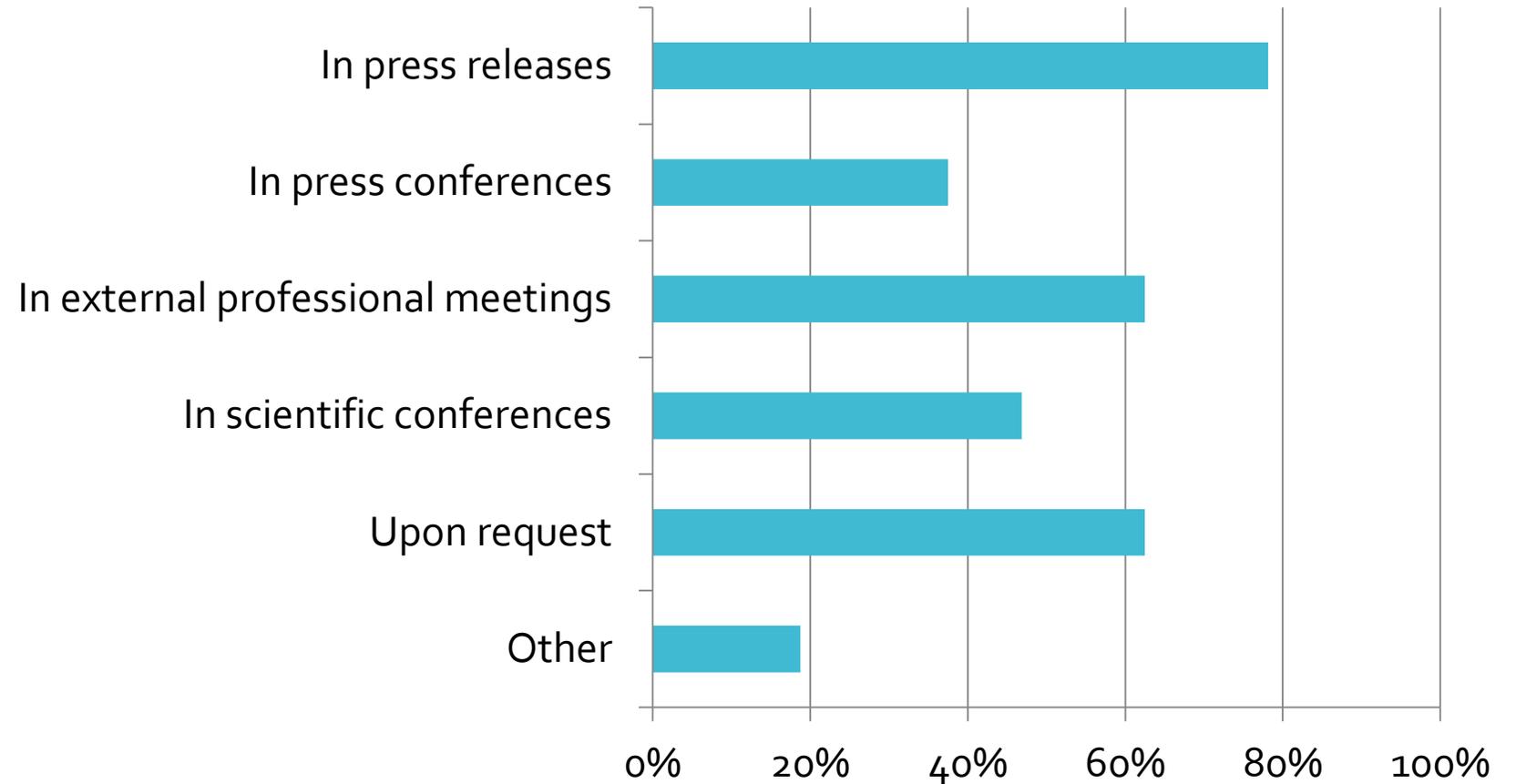
Recommended actions to be taken:

1. Provide clearly-identifiable means to users to ask questions and provide feedback to projection producers

2. Respond to requests in a timely manner

3. Identify common themes in customer queries and provide responses to FAQs or items known to be less understood in the dissemination material

Good practice 2

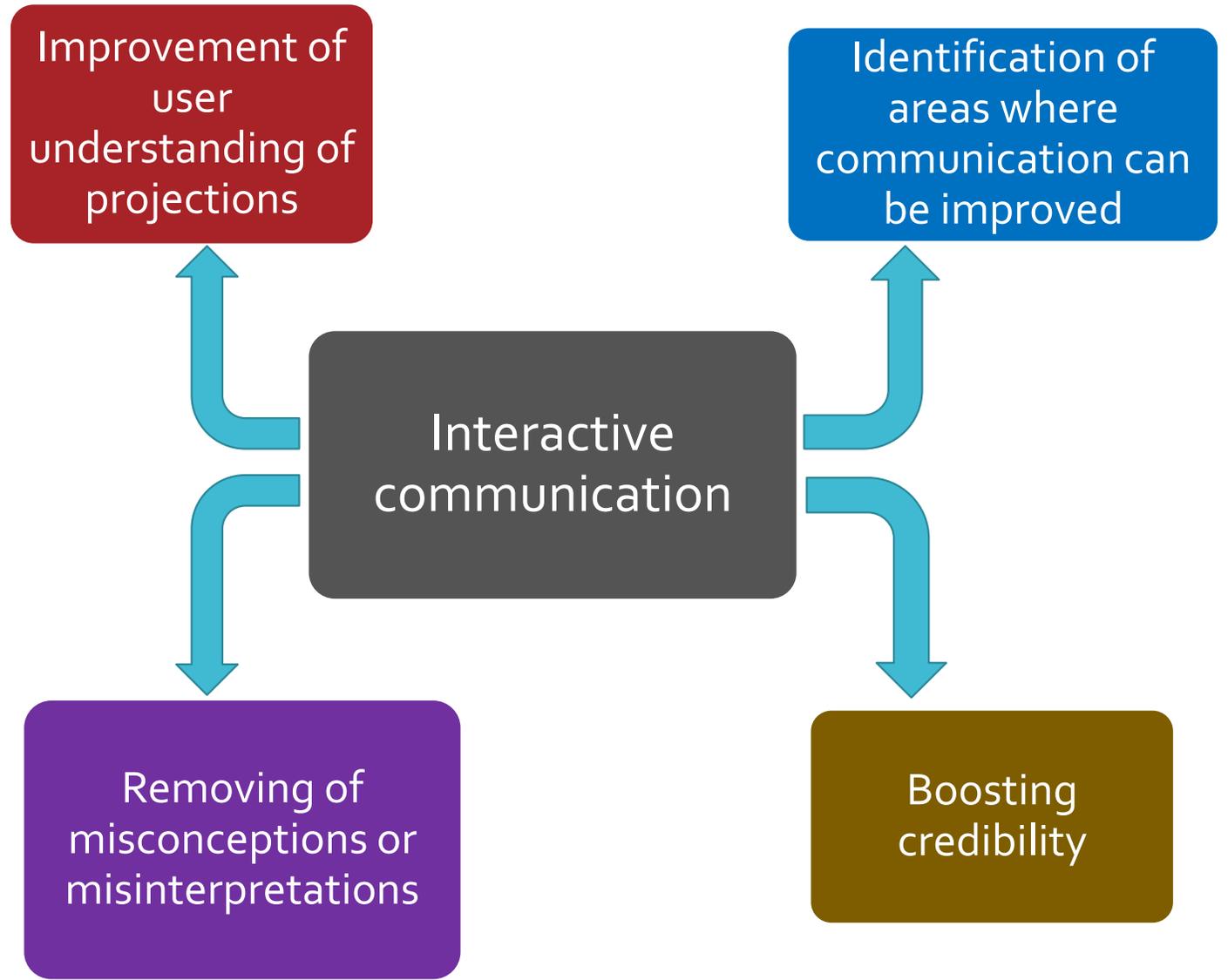developing "outreach activities" to engage directly with users in a substantive manner

Methods of dissemination of the results
(NSO Survey; N=32)

Good practice 3

Provide notices of forthcoming projection releases

41% of Users consider that some aspects of the communication could be improved

Aspects of the communication that could be improved according to Users (User Survey; N=55)
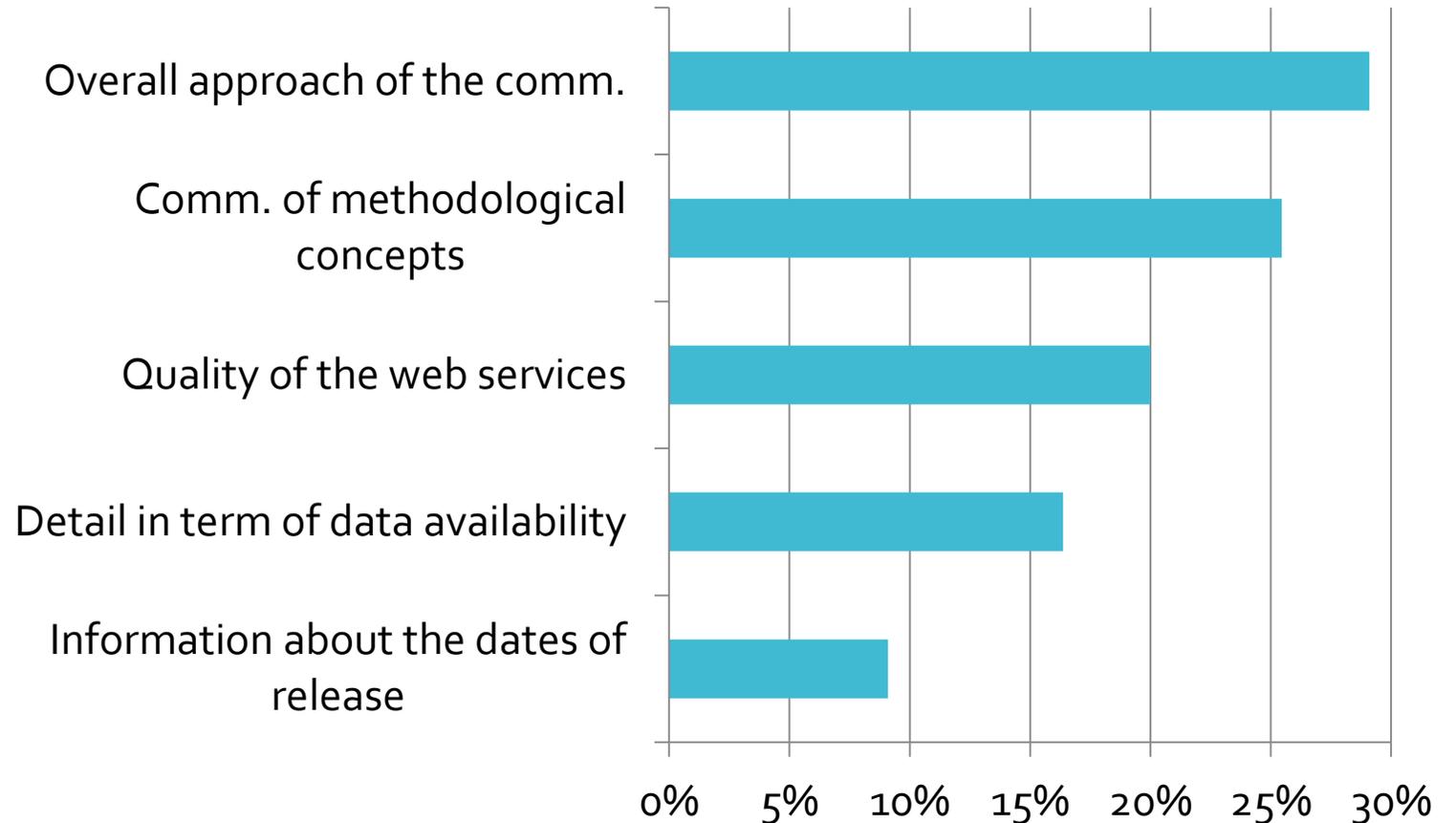
Good practice 4

Embrace traditional and new media

	POPULAR MEDIA	NEW MEDIA
WHAT	PRINT, RADIO, TELEVISION	INTERNET-BASED AND SOCIAL MEDIA
AUDIENCE	JOURNALISTS, PUBLIC	PEOPLE NOT TARGETED BY TRADITIONAL MEDIA
OBJECTIVE	AVOID MISUNDERSTANDINGS	INCREASE OF USERS
LIMITATION	Journalists are not always well equipped	Best practices in terms of online science communication still lacking
RECOMMENDED APPROACH: **BE PROACTIVE !**	Let media and public understand the uncertain nature of population projections	Investigate the use of new media to communicate dissemination materials

Good practice 5

Make electronic dissemination materials accessible and easy to navigate

Recommended actions to be taken:

1. Evaluate the ease-of-use and accessibility of electronically disseminated materials

2. Implement improvements to NSO websites that will enhance data retrieval capabilities and navigational ease for user (depending on the resources as well as on the power of control given to projection-makers)

3. Investigate means of improving the user experience of the population projection webpages, as well as search capabilities within the broader NSO website so that users can quickly locate the main projection webpage

Good practice 6

Investigate and document the needs of users

Identifying Users: a not so easy task...

- It is easier for users to contact the projection makers than for projection makers to contact users

- Users download materials from the NSO's website in an anonymous way

- No way for NSOs to know who has accessed their materials unless the user contacts them with an inquiry

- The best information NSOs have about their users is the number of web hits and/or downloads

Good practice 6

Investigate and document the needs of users

...but some actions for collecting information on users are possible !

1. Provide means for users to contact experts through the NSO's website (Good Practice 1)
2. Engage in outreach activities such as conferences, seminars, workshops (Good Practice 3)
3. Establish a working group that can help inform methodological changes, and also keeps the users involved
4. Maintain relationships with known users
5. Consultations (formal or informal)
6. Invite feedback whenever possible