UNECE

Role of National Statistical Offices in Informing the public in the context of climate change

Sara Svantesson (Statistics Denmark)

on behalf of Group D:

Haykanush Azizyan (Ministry of Environment of Armenia), Emil Mammadov (State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan), Otto Swertz (Statistics Netherlands), Angela Watkins (Office for National Statistics of the United Kingdom), Arturo de la Fuente (Eurostat), P. Bhanumati (IMF), Malgorzata Cwiek (UNECE)

UNECE Expert Forum for Producers and Users of Climate Change-Related Statistics
28-30 August 2023

Agenda

- Setting the scene
  - Policy context
  - Audiences and user needs for climate change-related statistics
  - Structured interviews with journalists in the UNECE region
- Lessons learned from interviews with journalists
  - Climate related data of most interest to the public
  - Sources most used by the journalists
  - Which climate change-related data is difficult to access
- How NSOs can contribute
  - Data
  - Dissemination and communication
- Recommendations
- Expert Forum is invited to provide feedback and additional country examples

Policy context for informing the public

- Achieving climate goals involves all parts of society
- *Action for Climate Empowerment* in the Paris Agreement (art. 12)
  - Education
  - Training
  - **Public awareness**
  - **Public access to information**
  - Public participation
  - International cooperation
- In order to contribute to key *ACE* elements, NSOs need to communicate and disseminate statistics to different audiences
- NSOs need to be attentive to user needs

Audiences and user needs for climate change-related statistics

UNECE

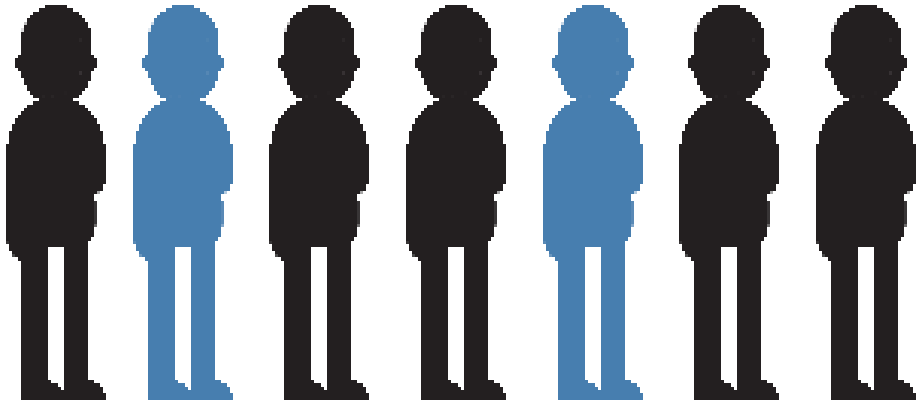
	"The public"	General **journalists**, teachers, students, consultants	Climate **journalists**, ministries, agencies, NGOs, climate activists	Data **journalists**, researchers, experts, developers
	Generally interested	**Specifically interested**	**Professionals and policymakers**	**Expert analysts**
Overview content Interactive maps, infographics, graphs Key figures, dashboards Simple wording, engaging visuals and titles	■	■	■	■
Commented statistics Press releases, reports, analysis Thematic webpages		■	■	■
Statistics Tables Documentation of statistics			■	■
Data, including microdata Tailored and detailed data Anonymized micro data Geospatially enabled data				■

Table 2.Needs for climate change-related statistics products by user group

Structured interviews with journalists in the UNECE region

- Why ask journalists?
  - **Public** go to the media for information
  - Journalists' **everyday work** is in disseminating information, data and statistics to the public
  - **Experts in current topics and ways** to effectively reach their audience
- Collecting experiences through **structured interviews**
  - Conducted via phone in July – November 2022
  - Prewritten questions with option to elaborate and give examples
  - Coverage: Geography, type of media, journalists technical skill

Lessons learned from interviews with journalists



Climate related data of most interest to the public

- Wide range of stories and topics
  - “Traditional” story-focused narratives
  - Graphics, visualizations
  - Analyses
  - Specialized data or GIS analysis skills
  - Stories with data as an essential element

Sources most used by the journalists (I)

- All interviewees do use climate data – all use climate data from different sources
- National statistical offices and international organisations
- Other sources mentioned by the journalists:
  - Hydro-meteorological institutes
  - Ministry of Environment/ Energy
  - Other national government sources
  - Universities
  - Private actors, social media

Sources most used by the journalists (II)

- Journalists report that **physical measures**: weather, emissions and energy are generally **well available** on national level.
- Resources that are in English and are easily available will be accessed and used more often by journalists.
- Time, resources and technical skill dictate which source is used
  - Mostly raw data/tables (4)
  - Both data and graphs/press releases (3)
  - Mostly graphs and press releases (3)

Sources most used by the journalists (III)

- Less technical journalists' needs
  - Help desks and direct contact
  - Fewer reference values and periods are preferred
  - Fact sheets and dashboards with most relevant data
  - Pre-releases under embargo
- Technical journalists' needs
  - Geospatial data in usable formats (shape files, JSON, vector format etc.)
  - Free and open-source raw data

Which climate change-related data is difficult to access? (I)

UNECE

- Examples of data identified by journalists:
  - Climate **adaptation**
  - **Business** and **finance**
    - Including financial climate change aid sent to other countries
    - Emissions from larger individual companies
    - Interactions between climate risk and economic damage
  - Impact of climate change on **health** and **nature**
  - Consumer **carbon footprint** measures

Which climate change-related data is difficult to access? (II)

UNECE

- Examples of issues identified by journalists:
  - **Coverage** issues
    - Lack of availability, particularly for parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America
    - Different scales, geographies and lack of coherence
  - Insufficient **timeliness**
    - Periodic (annual publications) are too old
    - Up-to-minute data is missing
  - **Granularity** issues
    - Local level data to inform local stories
  - **Accessibility** issues (two-fold)
    - Open access to data
    - Ready-made visualisations and interpretations

How NSOs can contribute (I)

- Data
  - The mandate of NSOs
  - Objectivity and factuality
  - Emissions: data and user guidance
  - Collect and present relevant data from other agencies, e.g. energy statistics
  - Present data on other climate-related topics such as foreign climate-aid, climate-related health expenditure, waste management, low-carbon energy consumption, business analysis on micro level
  - Geospatial data

How NSOs can contribute (II)

- Dissemination and communication
  - Static and interactive data presentations
    - Statistical yearbooks, bulletins, articles, websites, portals, dashboards, social media, tables, graphics, mapping tools, downloadable files etc.
  - Proactive outreach, e.g. to schools
  - Social media activities
    - Infographics, videos or highlights on LinkedIn, Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), Instagram
    - Dialog with users – can be resource costly
  - Searchability and machine-readability
  - Serving those who look for a quick answer – and those who want to know (much) more
  - Organisation and cooperation between communications department and statisticians at NSO

Draft recommendations for NSOs

- Map and regularly evaluate user needs
- Improve machine readability and searchability
- Assist users with thematic websites or dashboards for statistics and indicators
  - Structure “drivers”-”emissions”-“impacts”-”mitigation”-”adaptation”
  - Increase relevance with international comparisons
- Provide user guidance on the different methods/approaches
  - Short format: key figures or short fact box
  - Long format: Technical note and documentation of statistics

Expert Forum is invited to provide feedback or country examples

- Any feedback is appreciated!
- Country examples/good practices in data, communication, organisation etc.
- In the discussion
- Directly to the group (srs@dst.dk) or via online form sent out by the Secretariat
- Stage 2 for comments on the Guidance draft by September 15th

Thank you!