Support for managing the crisis

**CES Recommendations on the Role of Official Statistics in Measuring Hazardous Events and Disasters**

In June 2019, the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) adopted the CES Recommendations on the Role of Official Statistics in Measuring Hazardous Events and Disasters, which:

- Clarify the role of national statistical offices (NSOs) and other members of national statistical systems (NSSs) in providing information related to hazardous events and disasters, and
- Identify practical steps to better support disaster risk management efforts in coordination with national agencies responsible for disaster risk management.

Chapter 5 of the CES Recommendations provides a list of potential contributions of NSS to each phase of disaster risk management, including the phases of disaster response and recovery. This provides NSOs with guidance to address the current emergency situation (disaster response phase) with official statistics (e.g., on the geographical distribution of population at risk) and to plan specific activities that will be needed at the end of the crisis (for example specific surveys to measure disaster impacts). This chapter also recommends a set of basic statistics ("emergency data kit") which should be kept up-to-date and easily accessible in case of a disaster. The emergency data kit requires clarified procedures regarding the handling of data confidentiality, small scale-analysis, integration with other information etc. to be used in emergency situations without delay.

In the CES Recommendations, you will also find practical examples for:

- Using official statistics available in disaster-risk management while maintaining statistical confidentiality
- How NSOs could contribute to data analysis and communication with policymakers, media and public, etc.
Activities

Ongoing:

- UNECE Task Force on Measuring Hazardous Events and Disasters, which developed the Recommendations, is working under a renewed mandate to support NSOs in contributing to managing the current emergency situation.
- The Task Force is collecting the practical experience of NSOs in addressing the current and anticipated information demand, and how they deal with major challenges.

Upcoming:

During the 68th plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) (22-24 June 2020), the chief statisticians of all CES member countries, will discuss:

  - Data stewardship – new roles of NSOs in the changing world (organized by UNECE)
  - Impact of Covid-19 crises on business continuity of official statistics (organized by OECD)
- Sharing experience in implementing the CES Recommendations and Using geospatial data and tools for measuring COVID-19 impact - jointly with UN-GGIM:Europe

The Task Force will publish case studies on how NSOs respond to COVID-19 and develop core indicators on hazardous events and disasters.

Country practices

In addition to continuing their normal operations under very difficult circumstances, NSOs carry out new or unusual activities that help the government and the public to deal with the crisis. This collection of practices aims to help NSOs learn from each other, prepare for the recovery phase and improve the use of official statistics in disaster risk management in the future.

The following table includes examples of NSOs of Australia, Canada, Colombia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Romania, State of Palestine, Sweden, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

Challenges related to the regular production of official statistics, e.g. because staff working from home, difficulties to carry out interview-type surveys etc., can be found in other sections of this platform.

Please use the filter tool to select countries or categories that are of interest for you. The information can be downloaded in various formats.

The main sources of information are: (1) a special survey carried out by the UNECE Task Force on Measuring Hazardous Events and Disasters (and follow-up communication with NSOs), (2) the UNSD COVID-19 response website, (3) NSOs’ websites and (4) information provided directly by NSO. For updates and adding of information please contact Michael Nagy.

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| 34 | Mexico        | Dissemination | Providing data to Government for crisis management | INEGI has been working together with the Federal Government and the National General Health Council to provide data required from different government offices and keeping in mind the health of its personnel. INEGI data has been used to implement contingency plans for the outbreak of the disease:  
  - National database of private hospitals and clinics - for the Government to contact them and invite to join the National Hospital Reconversion Plan.  
  - Data on elderly people (over 60), so that local Governments will be prepared.                                                                 | 1      | 20-Apr-20  |
Currently, the biggest challenge faced by INEGI is its ability to collect high-quality and comparable statistics useful for monitoring the economic, health and public safety situation in the country. Considering that most data collection efforts are based on face-to-face interviews, current public health measures have imposed additional difficulties within the data production cycle. This situation is expected to last even weeks after the critical phase of the pandemic is over, given the fact that institutions will devote human and financial resources to solve unavoidable economic and social problems. It is expected to have a slowdown in public administration that may last for the rest of the year. Consequently, INEGI is seeking alternative methods for data collection: it is necessary to implement protocols that allow information to be collected without the need to risk the health of interviewers and informants. Yet this shift may cause comparability and precision issues. In other words, whilst disseminating statistics in a moment like this is crucial for decision-making purposes, field and government conditions will most likely have an impact on the quality and comparability of the data provided. For the next stage, one of the main challenges is to generate the conditions to give continuity to the historical series of statistical information. Due to this situation, clarifying notes will have to be included in the results reports regarding the effects of altering information collection periods, and altering the design of probabilistic survey samples. Thus, INEGI will need to communicate in the most transparent and comprehensible way possible, the limitations and drawbacks of the data provided. In particular, in the case of Socioeconomic Statistics, the challenges that we face now in order to give continuity to the work of the Directorate are:

- Designing tools to assign work at home to Census 2020 staff, including coverage verification from satellite images and the revision of addresses for sending invitation letters for self-enumeration via Internet or by telephonic interview in those dwellings with non-response status for the Census 2020.
- Redesign and planning of the verification process and the stages of the Census 2020 that were cancel, however, the task is complicated by the uncertainty of the dates to return to normal activities.
- Self-enrollment via the Internet has been promoted in those dwellings that maintain non-response status for the Census 2020; however, the response rate has been low, remaining below 10 percent.
- To train and equip staff with the necessary instruments to carry out telephone interviews in the dwellings in the Labour Force Survey where a telephone number is not available; and plan telephone interviews by means of invitation through letters in those dwellings where a telephone number is not yet available.

There are activities that have already been developed from this phase and will need to be maintained in the next phase in order to make the transition back to traditional means of information gathering, to ensure that the information currently being collected maintains the necessary quality and reflects the effects of the COVID-19 on population and economy. Normal activities for the generation of statistics will take even longer after the end of the confinement. It will take a while to regain the confidence of the population to establish face-to-face interaction with enumerators so a staggered return to regular activities is calculated. Some activities that were already carried out before the pandemic by the COVID-19 and that have now been strengthened as primary sources for generating information such as the application of Small Area Estimation techniques. This model has some limitations, but it will be useful to generate statistics to know the impact of the pandemic. In the case of starting with short employment interviews via telephone that allow for capturing the impact of the COVID-19, mainly in the labor market, these should be maintained for a certain period of time to guarantee their quality and planned coverage. It will probably be necessary to maintain the remote verification of the selected Census dwellings even after the confinement stage, since a higher non-response rate is estimated by the informants due to the persistent fear of contagion. Regarding government information, given the uncertainty generated by the behavior of the contingency in the country for the near future, various scenarios are being considered to best conclude the projects that were underway, as well as those scheduled to begin shortly. These scenarios contemplate the postponement of the information collection stages, the reduction of samples and the implementation of telephone interviews that replace those traditionally carried out face-to-face. INEGI is in touch with government personnel via email, telephone, or other means. Compared to previous data collection cycles, specific Government Censuses will be collected via web-based platforms, allowing multiple users to upload their data simultaneously. An additional action is to analyze and present to the public relevant information regarding the institutional capabilities of federal, state, and municipal governments to cope with the pandemic and its aftermath.

For INEGI many lessons have been learned. Mainly, even though protocols have been developed to work remotely in the face of catastrophic events such as earthquakes or fires, they have not been enough, because they do not consider the entire chain of information production. Specifically, the protocols developed do not contemplate personnel who are on the streets collecting information. In the scientific field, the exploration of alternative methodologies has remained stagnant in the experimental field and there has been no opportunity to implement sampling schemes or alternative collection methodologies. As it has already been mentioned, there are some experiments with small-area-estimation models, gathering information via telephonic or online. However, it will take a few years for these schemes to be formally considered in the generation of statistical information. In this sense, this pandemic has forced the institution to reflect upon the usual strategies to gather information. It has prompted the need to consider innovative strategies to conduct statistical exercises given the vulnerability of the traditional methods. On the other hand, this crisis has made evident the need to gather specific information regarding the institutional capabilities of governments to deal with major crises. It is an opportunity to deliberate on what information is more relevant to guide public policy decisions at the federal, state and municipal levels. INEGI needs to be prepared and to foresee atypical data collection environments. Every statistical program will need to devise alternative action plans along with a strong communication strategy. This situation invites us also to reflect on INEGI’s capabilities for quickly responding to data demands as well as to the type of contents that are most needed for official and public audiences. We also think that inter-institutional coordination is needed to deal with requests for information in an emergency of this type. In other words, the information has been requested according to the needs of the institutions and what the statistical office itself has considered important to share, but it would be appropriate to establish a protocol for orderly and expeditious attention in these cases. In summary, we can advise the following actions to be considered from this experience of the pandemic:

- Strengthen the generation of statistics from administrative records.
- To have a sampling frame of telephone numbers so that in case interviews need to be done remotely, they are nationally representative.
- We need to generate geo-referenced information for vulnerable populations such as indigenous people, Afro-Mexicans, the street population and the elderly.
- Additional actions are to analyze and present to the public relevant information regarding the institutional capabilities of federal, state, and municipal governments to cope with the pandemic and its aftermath.

INEGI is preparing a “Survey on the Economic Impact Generated by COVID-19 in Companies”. The objective of this survey is to produce qualitative indicators on the health and operational effects on companies of the main economic sectors. The results will be released to the general public in order to contribute to decision-making.
Do you have questions or want to share your experience? Let us know in the comments below.

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