

Brief Introduction to the User-producer dialogue in China Statistical Practice

Ladies and gentlemen:

I would like to introduce briefly the user-producer dialogue in China Statistical Practice.

Let me begin with the users of statistics.

Like in most countries, there are five main types of the users of statistics in China.

1. State Council and government agencies at national level, such as National Development and Reform Committee, Ministry of Finance etc. They use the statistics, in most of the case, macro or aggregated data, for making relative policies, setting the development goals and targets, monitoring the economic operation and assessing the impact of policy implementation. The aggregated data and descriptive analysis released periodically according to a release calendar set up in advance by NBS. Here are several dissemination channels:

Statistics Report, Brief Statistics and Statistical Research are three internal un-periodical publications which are released to government agencies only. Others include periodical data release meeting, Statistical Bulletin, Statistics Outline, Statistical Year Book, NBS website etc. Generally speaking, the monthly and quarterly data could be released about 10 days after the reference date. Yearly data could be released to government agencies from February.

2. Local governments. Local governments use statistics for local development plan and policies making.

3. Scholars and academic societies. They use the data for research and analysis. However accessing to micro data from outside of NBS is still difficult, for most of the micro data are on the confidential list.

4. Producer or consumer. They use the data for micro decision-making. They could access to statistics through published material, website and through consultant service provided by statistical system free or by paid some fee.

5. International organizations and NGOs.

Generally speaking, the users other than government agencies access to data about one week delay for monthly and quarterly data, and half to one month delay for yearly data. However, more and more data are released to public at the same time as to government agencies.

Next, I will describe how the user needs are incepted, assessed and prioritized and how stakeholders communicate each other. There is no formal procedure of user-producer dialogue in China, however this issue is paid high attention by the NBS, because to provide the reliable and efficient service, to satisfy the needs of users are the goal which NBS seeks for. In order to make the process of dialogue more clearly, I will use the coming national agricultural census as an example.

According to the Regulation of National Agriculture Census, the Agricultural Census is conducted at an interval of 10 years in China. The enumeration stage of second national agricultural census will carry out at the beginning of next year. From the beginning of 2005 to the end of 2006 is the preparation stage. The following steps are adopted to insure the well communication between users and producers in Agricultural

Census.

1. Just like in most of the national census, a leading group of second national agricultural census set up. It is headed by a vice premier of state and includes commissioner or deputy commissioner from 25 government agencies in central government. Up to now, there are two conferences attended by all the members of leading group. At the leading group level, the important issues related to census are settled down. In the case of a regular survey, the responsible department of NBS would keep close touch with relative government agencies. For example, there are twice meetings a year for national poverty monitoring survey. 14 government agencies will send the representative to attend the meeting. At the meeting, government agencies will submit their needs for survey of next term and acquire the results of current term.

2. Usually, an implementation office of leading group sets up to take the responsible for the daily works of census. In Second National Agricultural Census, Commissioner of National Bureau of Statistics is the director of the office. There are five working groups engaged in program designing, field supervision, data processing, promotion, quality control, results application and administrative management in the office. 25 government agencies mentioned above determine contact persons to keep the close relationship with the ACO.

Based upon the above framework, the communication among the user-producer is very fluent. User needs could be incepted and understood quickly. In AC, the 25 government agencies not only act as users of data, but also as stakeholders. They play the role as supervisors and accelerators of the census. Every member of leading group led one or two mission to the province to promote the local government to support the agricultural census and to insure the properly arrangement of the AC.

3. Consultant committee sets up for most of the census and large size sample surveys. In AC, the committee includes 16 consultants, who are senior officers, researchers, or experts in statistics, agriculture, rural development. The consultant committee is responsible for determining potential users, assessing the needs of various users and prioritize the needs of users. The census program is formulated and revised based on the results of discussion of the consultant committee and seminars.

4. Potential users are formally requested to submit their needs, provide their suggestions and opinions to census office and relative department of NBS. In AC, potential users were asked to submit their needs and contribute their opinions three times. ACO called for needs of users for AC at the first half of 2005, informed the users to provide the opinions for pilot census program and drafted census program at the beginning of 2006 and April of 2006 correspondently.

5. Several missions were sent to provinces to collect the needs of local governments and publics. In AC, investigation of special topic such as operation of state-owned farms and forestry farms also are done by NBS staff and experts in March and April.

6. Three domestic seminars on census questionnaire and arrangement, attended by representatives from local governments, institutes and universities, agencies of central government, international organizations, were hold for formulating and revise the census program.

7. An International Seminar was hold to absorb the opinions from international organizations and colleagues of other countries in May 2006.

In a word, the communication between user and producer of statistics is improving in China. We would like to learn from the experience of our neighbor countries and regions.

Thank you for your attention.