national
STATISTICS

Origin-Destination Statistics

Summary report of first analysis of response to the discussion paper, June 2000

Introduction

1. Following the roadshows in June 2000, some 43 responses were received from users. Some users made more than one response because we had asked for comments on a particular issue in advance of the rest.

2. The discussion paper sought comments on eight issues. The comments have been collated and those on most of the issues raised in the discussion paper are summarised for each issue below. The issues were listed in paragraph 14 of the paper. A further Advisory Group paper will cover detailed points raised on the tables proposed in the discussion paper.

Including tables on commuting destination and migration origin in local statistics instead of in origin-destination statistics

3. This proposal met with almost total approval and has, in effect, been implemented in the revised proposals for standard output for local statistics (issued September 2000).

Imputation of postcodes

4. Proposal was strongly welcomed.

5. The Census Offices expect to take a decision on this in October after further work has been done to meet the concerns of their statistical consultant. Users should also note that even if a method to impute addresses satisfies these concerns, it may not be developed because of pressures on IT staff.

6. If a method is developed it is likely to be a process preparing the edited database for output rather than part of edit.

Identification of workers and students

7. Users in Scotland expressed concern with the proposed way of distinguishing workers and students for the Special Workplace Statistics and Special Place of Study Statistics. The aim was that each person should be counted as a worker,

or a student, or neither. The main problem was that a large proportion of students would also be workers.

8. Further consideration is required. Options to be considered include:

   − Allowing an 'overlap' between two concepts so that some individuals are counted in both SWS and SSS.

   − Taking hours worked into account so that only those students who work more than a given number of hours are counted as workers. (This option would run counter to ILO definition of 'worker'.)

Definitions

9. Definitional issues other than the above were also put forward in the paper. These largely proved acceptable. They concerned:

   − the treatment of children under one year of age; and

   − the definition of a moving group and a wholly-moving household.

10. Some users raised a concern that the answer category on the Census form for address one year ago 'No usual address 1 year ago' will contain excessive numbers. It was suggested that this problem could be dealt with by imputation (see paragraphs 4 to 6).

Zones

11. Some users wanted to add a higher level are (say NUTS 1) with more detailed tables.

12. Some users queried the use for workplace of zones created on the basis of the number of residents they contained. The paper suggested that Output Areas with disproportionately large numbers of workplaces could be split into two or more postcode-based workplace zones.

13. Given the 1991 coding of areas, some users expressed concern about how areas were coded. There should be a clear hierarchy and consistency with local statistics.

14. Not all users were happy with the idea of a single UK product for each of the eight datasets. This proposal could lead to having:

   − to deal with many small flows; and

   − to accept less detailed tables than would be acceptable for the larger flows one would get for a more localised product.

15. There were the familiar arguments in favour of one or the other of ward or postcode sector. Users pointed out that some parts of the UK would have

different wards at the time the output was delivered from those existing on Census day.

Tables

16. Comments on the 35 proposed tables have yet to be considered in detail. Two immediate impressions are that users wanted

    – more categorisation by gender; and

    – changes to proposed age classifications.

Software

17. Three possible approaches to what sort of software might be developed for the analysis of origin-destination statistics were described or demonstrated at the roadshows. Comments received included:

    – origin-destination software should be easy for occasional users to use;

    – it should allow Scottish users to combine SWS and SSS to derive Special Commuting Statistic (SCS);

    – results should be easily exported to other software;

    – the user should be able to group zones and store these groupings for later use;

    – the user should be able to aggregate cells in tables to produce totals and subtotals; and

    – the software should be cheap!

Requirements for customised origin-destination statistics

18. There was naturally some difficulty responding on this issue without knowing what the standard tables will finally be.

19. Some users expected that they would request customised zones (possibly revised wards – see paragraph 15 above). More users expected that they would want output containing customised variables (or variables defined for other products but not contained in the standard origin-destination output. Also special populations may be chosen for analysis such as members of the armed forces.

20. Some users saw customised output as a way of overcoming limitations implied by each standard product being a single product for the UK (see paragraph 14 above).

21. Mention was made of the possibility of combining commuting with migration by linking three addresses (former address, current address, and workplace).

22. User realised that there may be constraints on what could be commissioned because of the risk of disclosure.

23. As for analysis software, users hoped that cost would not prove a barrier to commissioning any non-standard output.

Action

24. Advisory Group members are asked to note:

   (a) the comments have been collated to date from the responses to the Discussion Paper on Origin-Destination Statistics; and

   (b) that a further Advisory Group paper will cover detailed points raised on the tables proposed in the discussion paper.

Frank Thomas

GROS

5 October 2000