

**Arguments, Scenarios, and very many Experts:
A New Approach to Long-Range Global Demographic Forecasting**

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Our aim is to produce projections by age, sex and four levels of educational attainment for most countries in the world up to 2050. Assumptions will be based on the assessment (in electronic form) of large numbers of alternative arguments about the forces driving future change by a global pool of experts and subject to strict peer review. The expert elicitation will follow a transparent, inclusive and strictly argument-based approach to defining the assumptions that enter the projections. Traditionally, in all national or international agencies that produce population projections, the assumptions have been defined by a small group of in-house experts after (in many cases) consulting with selected outside experts. The nature of these consultations tends to vary greatly from country to country and the procedure is usually not transparent for people outside the process. This approach is considered unsatisfactory by a large majority of national statistical offices in the EU themselves. By contrast, the present exercise, taking into account insights from cognitive science and decision analysis, among other disciplines, applies a well structured and fully transparent process in which a large number of experts (hundreds or thousands) are asked to independently assess the validity and relevance of alternative arguments that are relevant for the assumed driving forces of future fertility, mortality, migration and education trends in specific countries. We will present on this novel and ambitious projection methodology, including the results of the piloting and testing of the questionnaire items and weights, as well as preliminary results from expert responses on one of the areas (fertility, mortality, migration, education) and/or from one geographical region (Asian, if available by then). This study is part of a larger project on forecasting societies' adaptive capacity to climate change, funded through a European Research Council Advanced Investigator Grant awarded to Prof. Wolfgang Lutz at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) in Laxenburg, Austria.