



## **International Association of Survey Statisticians Strategy Document 2024-2025 January 2024**

### **Background**

Sample surveys play a continuing fundamental role to collect granular data. They are a vital component of the national also international statistical systems, providing governments, businesses and civil society with the information they need to make good decisions. They are also the source of more than a third of the all 232 indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, probability surveys are important for assessing the quality in alternative data sources. So, the IASS motto “Promoting good survey theory and practice around the world” is a fundamental task to promote progress in our society.

The IASS is one of the seven associations of the International Statistical Institute (ISI). The IASS aligns itself with the ISI vision for the period 2023-2025.

Since the seventies, IASS has taken a prominent role in shifting the focus of research and policy to understanding and addressing the challenges faced by new forms of data and new data collection tools and methods. During the last decades, survey sampling and estimation methods have been progressively evolving, following the development of new tools of data collection: smart devices as meters, mobile phones, GPS systems and several new applications. Methods have been continuously advancing to measuring uncertainty and data quality, integrating Big and small data sources and developing methods to make inferences from the data. At the same time new methods for analyzing large volumes of data, such as machine learning and AI methods, are emerging. Moreover, rigorous approaches for incorporating and making inference from non-probability sampling have been at the forefront of recent research.

The focus of IASS has become and will remain engaging with scientific and management communities involved in data collection, data-driven decision making and socio-economic data analysis and embracing knowledge systems complementary to survey methods, such as social sciences, applied mathematics and computer science.

### **Context**

IASS objectives are:

- to promote the study and development of the theory and practice of sample surveys and censuses.
- To maintain and increase the interest in surveys and censuses among statisticians, governments and the public in the different countries of the world.

However, the world of surveys is changing fast:

- There are new methods and tools, such as generative Artificial Intelligence, that are an active area of research and have the potential to create new content in the development of survey statistics.
- The modern data ecosystem provides new data sources, including non-probability surveys, that provide granular data often very timely in comparison with surveys and censuses
- There are new approaches for engaging with the respondents and data users, while the survey response rates are in decline in most of the countries.
- The modernization of many national statistical systems calls for interoperability of data sources, including surveys, and integration of surveys among themselves and with censuses, geospatial data and administrative archives.

We have a challenge to spread good survey theory and practice in this changing world demonstrating the potential and effectiveness of traditional and new survey procedures, to contribute to the creation of a survey-culture for trusted smart statistics in this complex data ecosystem.

The voice of survey methods is now heard at global and regional conferences, from the Northern Baltic Ukrainian network of survey methodologies in Europe, where IASS is a supporter, to the Workshops organized in Africa, Nepal and Pakistan, where IASS is one of only few region-based member associations.

### **Plan Themes for 2024-25**

The strategy for 2024-25 builds on the recent strategy document 2021-2023 and our current activities:

**Webinars:** the monthly webinar series started in 2020 during the Covid pandemic and we have now conducted 32 webinars as of September 2023. The response from our membership is very positive and some webinars saw very large participation of almost 400 hundreds registered participants Events Calendar: <http://isi-iass.org/home/events/>  
Past webinar presentations: <http://isi-iass.org/home/webinars/>

**Journal:** The Survey Statistician is in good health. It is released twice a year and can be found here: <http://isi-iass.org/home/services/the-survey-statistician/> as well as a special website for the Ask The Expert column here: <http://isi-iass.org/home/ask-the-experts/>. Since 2007, the Survey Statistician has been upgraded to include a New and Emerging Methods Section written by leading Survey Statisticians around the world, an Ask the Expert Section, a Book Review Section as well as important information about relevant journal publications and upcoming



conferences. It also includes a section on Country Reports where our membership can read about exciting survey applications being conducted in different countries. The July 2023 88th issue of The Survey Statistician celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the IASS with many contributions from IASS past presidents and other leading survey statisticians.

**Country Representatives developments and applications:** The current Executive Committee of the IASS is now updating the list of country representatives. Their role is to provide Country Reports for The Survey Statistician and they will also help with a recruitment drive which will be carried out in the Autumn of each year.

**Newsletter:** The IASS newsletter is distributed every month and also online here: <http://isi-iass.org/home/services/newsletters/> We provide important announcements and updates on upcoming webinars, conferences and awards, and include relevant publications and books. The newsletter also feeds into the monthly ISI newsletter.

**Prizes:** The Cochran- Hansen Prize <http://isi-iass.org/home/cochran-hansen-prize/> was established in 1999 and is a well-known and respected prize for young researchers in developing countries. It gives an opportunity to participate in the World Statistics Conference (WSC). This anniversary year provides a basis for linking the prize with wider efforts to engage young statisticians and young people more generally. The recently established Hukum Chandra memorial prize for mid-career researchers is awarded in 2022 for the first time and every other year. The prize is open to applicants from all the regions of the world <http://isi-iass.org/home/wp-content/uploads/Hukum-Chandra-Memorial-Prize.pdf> .

**Conferences:** IASS gives financial and methodological support for workshops, conferences and similar events, including the satellite conference to the WSC related to Small Area Estimation and Survey Statistics. The voice of survey research is now heard at global and regional conferences thanks to the support of IASS. IASS also helps organize the WSC Invited Paper Sessions on themes related to survey methods and survey statistics.

**Short Courses:** The IASS sponsored four online short courses prior to the 2021 WSC: Quality of multisource statistics; Introduction to Graph Sampling; Statistical Disclosure Control: Past, Present and Future; and Communicating health data: the COVID-19 experience. These were well attended. For the 2023 WSC in Ottawa, the short courses went back face-to-face. There were 3 short courses offered that were sponsored by the IASS: Graph Sampling, Statistical Data Privacy and Statistical Data Integration with an additional relevant course sponsored by the IAOS: Small Area Estimation. However, only one course, Statistical Data Integration, actually had enough participants to go ahead.

As can be seen by our current activities, our central strategy is that the IASS should be useful and engaging with our membership so that we can expand our outreach.

Despite IASS many successes it is not time to rest and we still have limitations:

- We have limited reach and impact with new technologies representatives, Civil Society Organizations, that are more and more involved in data collection via Citizen Generated Data and Citizen Science. These organizations are interested in producing indicators, for example for the Sustainable Development Goals, and are often not using survey or scientifically-based data.
- Although we have had success in identifying many IASS country representatives, we still need to ensure that all countries have representation.
- Our communication plan using social media needs to be further developed.
- As a key importance, we need to increase our individual members and institution members and expand our outreach. This can be achieved through the help of country representatives and social media engagement.
- Young generations of professionals and researchers from developed and developing countries need more support to follow the evolution of surveys in the modern data ecosystem.

This implies three results (outcomes) for our strategic plan:

- (1) Undertake a recruitment drive to expand our membership
- (2) Engage our members to become even more involved with IASS both on the Country and Global levels
- (3) Help our members to grow professionally, through the tools provided by IASS: Conferences, Webinars, Workshops, Short Courses, Prizes and Publications – all disseminated through IASS's network,
- (4) Continue to expand the IASS network with solutions and opportunities through IASS communication plan and social networks.

The next actions (outputs) that contribute to achieving the outcomes will be:

- Build new **partnerships** and increase institutional members with organizations , such as private and public NGOs, NSIs, Data Providers, Business companies involved in Big data production, who share our goals and/or are involved in generating data to integrate into surveys or to facilitate surveys to integrate with administrative archives and censuses, or alternatively are involved in the process of Citizen Generated Data and smart statistics.
- Working with the Editor- in -Chief, we will add a new section to **The Survey Statistician** for the Early Career Survey Statistician.
- Enhance the connection and communication with IASS **Country representatives** to help with recruitment and visibility within countries and ensure outreach.
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- Design a **social communication plan** using social media (X, LinkedIn) and the website to disseminate IASS activities, particularly the webinar series among new audiences.
- Target the IASS **financial support** for Conferences and events as a tool to build new partnerships.
- Offer online short courses on a regular basis to ensure statistical capacity building.
- Promote IASS through sponsoring sessions at focused workshops, for example workshops organized within NSIs or other similar initiatives.
- Organize a bespoke IASS **satellite conference to 2025 65th WSC** and as a permanent feature of IASS activities for each WSC.

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January 2024