

November 2024 Newsletter: International Association of Survey Statisticians

Cochran-Hansen Prize 2025: Competition for Young Survey Statisticians from Developing and Transitional Countries

In celebration of its 25th anniversary in 1999, the International Association of Survey Statisticians (IASS) established the Cochran-Hansen Prize, which is awarded every two years for the best paper on survey research methods submitted by a young statistician from a developing or transition country.

For the 2025 edition, the Cochran-Hansen Prize consists of research expenses up to €1500 to present his or her paper at the 65th World Statistics Congress of the International Statistical Institute ([65th ISI World Statistics Congress 2025](#)) to be held in The Hague, the Netherlands, 5-9 October 2025. This recognition will cover the WSC registration and travel expenses to the conference as well as participation in a short course. Credit should be given to IASS for its support during conference presentations or in the publication supported by the Cochran-Hansen Prize.

Participation in the competition for the prize is restricted to young statisticians from developing countries ([Low and Middle-Income Countries](#)) that are living in such countries and were born in 1990 or later.

A paper submitted for the competition must consist of original work which is either unpublished or has been published after February 28th, 2023. A paper may be based on a university thesis and should be written in English. The deadline for submission of papers for the 2025 prize is February 28th, 2025. All papers must be sent to the chair of the IASS 2025 Cochran-Hansen Prize Committee, Eric Rancourt at: eric.rancourt@statcan.gc.ca by the deadline.

Each submission must be accompanied by a cover letter, stating the author's year of birth, nationality, and country of residence. The cover letter should also indicate if the paper submitted is based on a PhD thesis and, in the case of a joint paper, the contribution to the paper made by the prize competitor. The papers submitted will be reviewed by members of the Cochran-Hansen Prize Committee appointed by the IASS. The decision of the Committee will be final. The prize winner will be notified on or before March 31st, 2025, by email.

For further information, please contact: Eric Rancourt, Statistics Canada
Email: eric.rancourt@statcan.gc.ca

Call for Requests for Support for Workshops and Conferences 2025

The International Association of Survey Statisticians (IASS) will consider providing financial support for workshops, conferences and similar events that:

- promote the study and development of the theory and practice of statistical surveys and censuses and associated subjects, and
- foster interest in these subjects among statisticians, organizations, governments, and the general public in different countries of the world.

The proposed conference, workshop or similar event must be well governed, with a clear organising structure (virtual or in-person), and an ability to account for the funding provided, in addition to give the IASS visible credit for the support provided. Preference will be given to:

- activities that promote sharing of knowledge and practice across a number of countries which would not normally have opportunities to share such knowledge and practice;
- facilitating attendance at such activities by people who would be otherwise unlikely to be able to attend, but whose presence would add appreciable value to the activity in terms of furthering IASS objectives; this attendance may be by a participant from a developing country, or a student, or it may be in terms of a teacher/presenter who would particularly enrich the event, who would otherwise be unlikely to attend; and
- forms of assistance that support IASS membership attendance at the event.

To apply for support, please send a document project, including a budget sheet, to IASS President Natalie Shlomo (Natalie.shlomo@manchester.ac.uk) and in cc to IASS President-Elect Partha Lahiri (plahiri@umd.edu) before May 31st.

Applications should address the criteria set out above and comply with the mission of IASS. The total amount of funds available under this scheme will be € 1,500 in one year and will be shared to support more than one project.

Contributions sought for a special issue of Survey Methodology on the theme: Shaping the future of survey statistics in the data-driven era

Sample surveys play a fundamental role to collect granular data. They are a vital component of international statistical systems, providing governments, businesses and civil society with the information they need to make good decisions. Due to the need to obtain more granularity in data for policy and empirical research, alternative data sources are being considered for use in statistical processes. Given the abundance of new sources of data, there has been a prominent shift of focus on research and policy to understanding and addressing the challenges posed by new forms of data and new data collection tools and methods. Probability surveys continue to be crucial, not just for collecting data that are unavailable in alternative data sources, but also for assessing the quality in these alternative data sources, particularly with respect to representativeness, coverage and measurements.

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 measure uncertainty and data quality, integrating Big and small data sources and developing methods to make inferences from the data, particularly through small area estimation. 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 with the aim of ensuring equitable statistics and representativeness of minoritised populations. Finally, with new forms of data, data integration and multisource statistics, there are new challenges arising in protecting

the confidentiality and privacy of statistical units, moving towards perturbative methods and accounting for these perturbation errors in statistical analysis.

Proposed special issue:

In light of the current and fast-changing pace of the data ecosystem, the planned special issue will cover many topics on the future of survey methodology and survey statistics, including:

- New forms of data collection (e.g. smartphone), passive data collection and other innovations in data collection
- Mixed mode data collections, adaptive and responsive survey designs
- Total survey error and methods for correcting non-sampling errors (coverage error, measurement error, non-response bias)
- Quality frameworks for non-survey data, uncertainty quantification for multiple-source statistics and variance estimation methods
- Future of survey sampling, including sampling Hard-to-Survey groups and ensuring equitable statistics
- Research and development with applications of machine learning and AI methods in survey research
- Data integration of multiple sources of data, including non-survey data (administrative data, census data, paradata and big data) and non-probability survey data
- Statistical data integration
- Small area estimation including data integration with non- survey data
- Using non-survey data to augment survey data collection, estimation and bias mitigation
- Non-probability sampling and compensating for selection bias
- Privacy and confidentiality

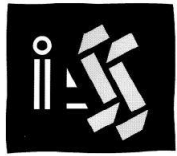
Researchers considering contributing a manuscript for this special issue are kindly requested to indicate their interest by sending a tentative title and short abstract to the guest editors (maria.ferrante@unibo.it and natalie.shlomo@manchester.ac.uk) by July 4th, 2025. The deadline for submitting manuscripts to the special issue is December 31st, 2025. All those wishing to submit a manuscript are encouraged to present their paper at the ITACOSM2025-IASS Satellite Conference to the 2025 World Statistics Congress. This conference will be held July 1st-4th, 2025 in Bologna, Italy. The [website](#) for further information is here: <https://eventi.unibo.it/itacosm-2025>.

The call for abstracts to the conference will be sent out in December 2024 with the abstract submission for contributed papers open from February 1st, 2025 to March 31st, 2025. All those wishing to submit a paper to the special issue are encouraged to submit an abstract to the ITACOSM2025-IASS Satellite conference.

All manuscripts submitted to the special issue will be subject to the standard rigorous peer-review that applies to all submissions in Survey Methodology. Note that Survey Methodology usually publishes innovative theoretical or applied research papers, and sometimes review papers, that provide new insights on statistical methods relevant to National Statistical Offices and other statistical organizations. Please consult the [Survey Methodology](#) website: www.statcan.gc.ca/surveymethodology, for more information about the journal.

The link to submit papers to Survey Methodology is through the [submission portal](#): <https://mc04.manuscriptcentral.com/surveymeth>. Please indicate that the submission is for the special issue in your cover letter.

Please do not hesitate to contact the guest editors if you have further questions.



Sincerely,

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Call for the 2026 Waksberg Award

The journal Survey Methodology has established in 2001 an annual invited paper series in honor of the late Joseph Waksberg to recognize his outstanding contributions to survey statistics and methodology. Each year a prominent survey statistician is chosen by a four-person selection committee appointed by Survey Methodology and the American Statistical Association. The selected statistician is invited to write a paper for Survey Methodology that reviews the development and current state of an important topic in the field of survey statistics and methodology. The paper reflects the mixture of theory and practice that characterized Joseph Waksberg's work. The recipient of the Waksberg Award is also invited to give the Waksberg Invited Address, usually at the Statistics Canada Symposium, and receives an honorarium. More information on past winners is here: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/12-001-x/award-prix-eng.htm>

A call is out now to nominate the 2026 Waksberg Award winner. Nomination of individuals to be considered should be sent by email before February 15, 2025 to the chair of the committee, Jae Kwang Kim (jkim@iastate.edu). Nominations should include a CV and a nomination letter. Nominations remain active for 5 years.

IASS Sponsored Sessions at International Conferences and Workshops

The IASS is happy to continue partnerships with local organizers of workshops and conferences around the world and to sponsor sessions focusing on cutting-edge applications of survey statistics. If you would like to collaborate on organizing a session, please get in touch with **Natalie Shlomo** natalie.shlomo@manchester.ac.uk.

65th 2025 World Statistics Congress (WSC), October 5 to 9, 2025

Visit the 2025 WSC website: <https://www.isi-next.org/conferences/isi-wsc2025/>. The weekly overview week overview schedule is available: <https://www.isi-next.org/conferences/isi-wsc2025/week-overview/> and early bird registration has now opened: https://www.isi-next.org/conferences/isi-wsc2025/fees_2025/

The Invited Paper Sessions programme for the 2025 WSC is now live on the website here: <https://www.isi-next.org/conferences/36/programme/>

The Short Courses Committee, chaired by Prof. Dr. Peter van der Heijden, will develop a Short Courses programme to meet the needs of participants at the WSC. The programme will cover

a wide range of topics with a special focus on young statisticians. A call is open now for proposals to help shape the Short Courses programme. The link to submit a short course proposal is here: <https://www.isi-next.org/conferences/isi-wsc2025/short-course/>

IASS Satellite Conferences to the 65th WSC, July 2025

There will be two satellite conferences to the 65th World Statistics Congress (WSC) that will be held in The Hague October 5 – 9, 2025. The satellite conferences will both be held in July 2025:

1. 9th Italian Conference on Survey Methodology and International Association of Survey Statisticians (**ITACOSM2025 - IASS**) Satellite Conference, July 1-July 4, 2025, **Bologna Italy**. We are delighted to announce 5 keynote speakers: **Alina Matei** from University of Neuchatel, **Nikos Tzavidis** from the University of Southampton, **Jean-Francois Beaumont** from Statistics Canada, **Bella Struminskaya** from University of Utrecht and **Michael Elliot** from the University of Michigan. Two half-day short courses will be held the day before on June 30, 2025 in the beautiful town of Rimini: **Advanced sampling and estimation methods with R**, taught by Alina Matei and **Introduction to Small Area Estimation (SAE) and Some Topics of Recent Research Interest**, taught by Nikos Tzavidis. More information about the conference and the short courses appear now on the conference website: <https://eventi.unibo.it/itacosm-2025>
2. Small Area Estimation Conference (**SAE 2025**), July 7-11, 2025, **Turin, Italy**. The international conference will be an opportunity for an exchange of ideas between statisticians, survey methodologists, engineers, mathematicians, computer scientists, and others interested in combining information from multiple databases in order to make reliable inferences at granular levels. In addition to traditional topics in small area estimation, the conference will cover a few emerging topics in survey and official statistics (e.g., nonprobability sampling, integration of new data sources, machine learning, artificial intelligence, privacy, etc.). The conference is co-sponsored by the International Association of Survey Statisticians (IASS) and International Association of Official Statistics (IAOS). The SAE 2025 conference will feature keynote speeches from Partha Lahiri and Ray Chambers. There will also be many invited sessions and a panel discussion on Opportunities and Challenges for Official Statistics in a Digital Era. More information about the conference SAE 2025 appears on the conference website: <https://www.sae2025.org/>

IASS Webinar Series

The IASS Webinar Series continues to be a **very successful** initiative. The current timetable is available on the calendar of events page of the IASS website: <http://isi-iass.org/home/events/> for upcoming IASS webinars. Note that CET is Central European Time. Links to register for the webinars are also provided in the advertisement. A list of previous IASS webinars with the presented slides can be found at: <http://isi-iass.org/home/webinars/> while recordings for past webinars can be found at: <https://www.isi-web.org/courses-webinars-workshops>. If you would like to contribute with suggestions for future speakers, please contact **Andrés Gutierrez Rojas** at andres.gutierrez@cepal.org.

IASS Webinar 47: Data-driven Area-Specific Selection of Synthetic or Nested-error models
Speaker: Isabel Molina , Department of Statistics and Operations Research at

Complutense University of Madrid

Date and Time: 18 December 2024, 2:00 – 3:30 pm (CET)

The registration link:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/4817199221727/WN_7wuxq8SKTnSUfCdTgruyhw#/registration

IASS Webinar 49: Data-driven Area-Specific Selection of Synthetic or Nested-error models
Speaker: Andrew Mercer, Pew Research Center

Date and Time: 26 February 2025, 2:00 – 3:30 pm (CET)

The registration link:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/8017279616727/WN_2a2qqVHnRTK6zJp6L2zl0g#/registration

Please note the following confirmed upcoming webinars and the speakers:

IASS Webinar 48: 29 January 2025, 2:00 – 3:30 pm (CET) Danny Pfeffermann

IASS Webinar 50: 26 March 2025, 2:00 – 3:30 pm (CET) Sharon Lohr

IASS Webinar 51: 25 April 2025, 2:00 – 3:30 pm (CET) JNK Rao

IASS Webinar 52: 28 May 2025, 2:00 – 3:30 pm (CET) Carolina Franco

We are also delighted to announce a special webinar titled: **Professional Ethics for Statistical Practices** with the speaker **Dr. Walter J. Radermacher**, Chair of the ISI Advisory Board on Ethics and (honorary) Professor at the Statistical Institute of the Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich that will be held on **Friday, January 10th at 2 pm CET**. Please [register](#) for the webinar at this link:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/4017303882413/WN_qSskE2TNTaSq3HeH5AJBlw#/registration

Conferences on survey statistics and related areas

2024 Third Workshop on Methodologies for Official Statistics, Istat, Rome, Italy, from December 4 to 5, 2024. The two-day event gathers researchers specialised in statistical methodologies applied to official statistics, and aims at promoting the exchange of ideas and best practices. This workshop focuses on understanding the impact of new data sources (particularly big data and, more broadly, non-probability data) and new methods (as machine learning) on the production of official statistics. Note that there will be a special invited session sponsored by the **IASS** titled: **New Data Sources for Small Area Estimation**. The session will be chaired by **Natalie Shlomo**, President of the IASS, and the ‘master class’ will be delivered by **Jan Van Den Brakel**. Other speakers are **Francesco Schirripa Spagnolo** and **Loredana Di Consiglio**, with a discussion by **M. Giovanna Ranalli**. The conference website is here: <https://www.istat.it/en/event/workshop-on-methodologies-for-official-statistics/> and includes the link to the programme as well as links for either online or in-person participation.

New Techniques and Technologies in Statistics (NTTS) 2025 is an international biennial scientific conference series, organized by Eurostat, on new techniques and methods for official statistics, and the impact of new technologies on statistical collection, production and dissemination systems. The meeting will be hosted in Brussels in the Charlemagne Building from **March 11, 2025 to March 13, 2025**. The conference website is <https://cros.ec.europa.eu/dashboard/ntts2025>

9th Italian Conference on Survey Methodology and International Association of Survey Statisticians (ITACOSM2025 - IASS) Satellite Conference will be held on July 1- 4, 2025 in **Bologna, Italy**. The two half-day short courses will be held on June 30th in Rimini, Italy. More information can be found at this link: <https://eventi.unibo.it/itacosm-2025>

Small Area Estimation Conference (SAE 2025) will be held on July 7-11, 2025 in **Turin, Italy**. More information can be found at this link: <https://www.sae2025.org/>

65th ISI World Statistics Congress 2025 will be held on October 5-9, 2025 in The Hague. More information here: <https://www.isi-next.org/conferences/isi-wsc2025/>

IASS Websites:

The Survey Statistician issues are available at <http://isi-iass.org/home/services/the-survey-statistician/>

IASS Newsletters are available at <http://isi-iass.org/home/services/newsletters/>

The calendar of events is available at <http://isi-iass.org/home/events/>

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<https://www.linkedin.com/company/international-association-of-survey-statisticians-iass>

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Reading of the Month

The reading of the month is the article titled: **A Two-stage Bayesian Small Area Estimation Approach for Proportions**, by James Hogg, Jessica Cameron, Susanna Cramb, Peter Baade and Kerrie Mengersen. The article is published in the International Statistical Review, Vol. 92, Issue 3, December 2024, pages 455-482: <https://doi.org/10.1111/insr.12572>

The article addresses the issue of small area estimation when the data are very sparse or when estimates are required for areas with very small populations. This is particularly of concern when modelling outcomes that are proportions. The authors propose a two-stage Bayesian hierarchical small area estimation approach for proportions that can account for survey design, reduce direct estimate instability and generate prevalence estimates for small areas with no survey data. In the first stage, an individual level logistic model is fitted to the survey data, where individual level predictions are used to generate area level estimates. In the second stage, these

area estimates serve as data in an area level Fay & Herriot (1979) (FH) model to further smooth and impute estimates for nonsampled areas.

The simulation study compares the proposed approach with existing Bayesian small area estimation methods and shows that the proposed approach can provide optimal predictive performance (Bayesian mean relative root mean squared error, mean absolute relative bias and coverage) for proportions under a variety of data conditions, including very sparse and unstable data. The authors assess the proposed approach in a real application to model estimates of smoking prevalence for 1,630 small areas in Australia using the 2017–2018 National Health Survey data combined with 2016 census data. The application includes more sophisticated modelling techniques such as fully Bayesian benchmarking and spatial smoothing. The authors conclude that given the need for higher resolution area level estimates, small area estimation methods need to tackle sparsity issues. The authors leverage both area and individual level models in a two stage approach and highlight future avenues of research.