

## Letter from the President

Dear IASS Members,

The IASS Executive Committee have been working very hard to promote and support the many activities that serve our community of survey statisticians. I'm very grateful to Partha Lahiri, Eric Rancourt, Andres Gutierrez, Jiraphan Suntornchost and Annamaria Bianchi for their dedication in undertaking all of the IASS initiatives. I am also grateful to the ISI Permanent Office, particularly to Conchita Kleijweg and her team, for supporting IASS operations and administration and ensuring that everything is run smoothly.

Now is the time to spread the word about IASS to your networks and to help increase our membership. Professional societies, such as the IASS, play a pivotal role in the shaping of new strategies for statistical systems. We have a role in: Ensuring leadership and capacity building; Collaborating on codes of practice and adherence to quality assurance; and Maintaining confidence in new statistical systems through good data governance, ethics and public engagement. Our [strategy document](#) sets out how we deliver services and activities to meet these challenges, but we require more members. To renew or join the IASS, please [use this link](#). Also, you can download our IASS [brochure](#) to pass around to your networks. Our motto: **Promoting good survey theory and practice around the world.**

We are busy planning the IASS satellite conferences that will be held in July. Please visit the websites [ITACOSM2025-IASS](#) from July 1-4, 2025 in Bologna, Italy and the [SAE2025](#) from July 7-11, 2025 in Torino, Italy. Two [short courses](#) will be held prior to the ITACOSM2025-IASS satellite conference on June 30<sup>th</sup> in Rimini, Italy. The 2025 IASS Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held during the ITACOSM2025-IASS conference and will be held in a hybrid format for all IASS members to join. The [World Statistics Congress 2025](#) will be held in the Hague from October 5-9, 2025 and the IASS will sponsor 11 Invited Papers Sessions on a range of topics related to survey statistics. In addition, there are two Special Invited Sessions: the IASS President's Invited Speaker session and the 2025 Cochran-Hansen Prize session. The list of upcoming conferences and workshops are featured on our [events page](#) on the IASS website and in our [monthly newsletters](#). The Survey Statistician (past issues can be found [here](#)) continues to be our flagship IASS publication. An essential and historical part of The Survey Statistician are the country reports and we are very grateful to the IASS country representatives for their dedication in submitting timely articles. We are also very grateful to our editorial team of The Survey Statistician, in particular our Editor-in-Chiefs, Danutė Krapavickaitė and Alina Matei, for producing and publishing this outstanding publication. Our highly successful IASS webinar series continues to provide stimulating and informative talks from leading survey statisticians around the world and I thank Andres Gutierrez for organizing this successful series. We provide regular updates on our [IASS website](#) and through our increasing social media presence, and I thank Annamaria Bianchi for posting and coordinating our social media accounts on Facebook, LinkedIn and X. Finally, I would like to point out that we are in the process of collecting nominations for the [2025 Cochran-Hansen prize](#) on the best paper in survey research methods submitted by a young statistician from a developing or transition country and I thank Eric Rancourt for chairing the selection committee.

As per our strategic document, we have been increasing the visibility of IASS by sponsoring special invited sessions and have recently participated in three workshops/conferences. These were:

- (1) Workshop on Small Area Estimation held in hybrid format at the Joint Program in Survey Methodology (JPSM), University of Maryland on March 15, 2024;
- (2) The International Canadian Methodology Symposium in a session titled: 'Small Area Estimation: Extensions, Applications and New Developments' held in Ottawa on October 30th, 2024;
- (3) The Istat Third workshop on Methodologies for Official Statistics in a session titled: 'Advancements in Small Area Estimation with a Focus on Using Non-survey Data' held in Rome on December 5th, 2024.

The overall theme of the special invited sessions was on small area estimation (SAE). In the modern data ecosystem, there is increasing focus on new ways of integrating survey and non-survey data. This can be done directly through linking and building statistical registers with mass imputation, combining administrative data and survey data, and have been largely considered in the context of replacing censuses. Another way of integrating survey and non-survey data is through SAE. In SAE we combine direct and indirect (synthetic) estimates derived from auxiliary information to obtain reliable and more efficient estimates at unplanned domains. There is an abundance of literature on this topic for area-level and individual-level models with random effects, temporal and/or spatial effects, mean square error estimation and benchmarking small area estimates to design-based planned totals. For an excellent overview of topics in SAE, see the 2015 edition of the *Small Area Estimation* book by J.N.K. Rao and I. Molina.

SAE requires auxiliary information and in today's data environment, there is more use of non-survey data, for example, data from geospatial, remote sensor and satellite data as well as other forms of new data sources including non-probability samples. SAE is an efficient way of combining data sources that can produce reliable estimates with uncertainty quantification. In the future, surveys may become smaller with the need to ensure high standards for data collection, but they will be used primarily to correct representativeness and coverage in non-survey data or through model-based inference. There is a need for more acceptance of model-based estimation within our national statistical systems going forward. At the same time, we need to inform government and policy makers of the changes to national statistical systems that will rely more on innovative methodologies and model-based approaches to combine data sources. This also requires government and private sector assurances on the availability of these non-survey data on a regular basis and contingency plans in place if access suddenly stops. The IASS is well-placed to take a leading role in promoting policies and informing policy makers about these new paradigms in survey statistics moving towards the future.

On a final note, I would be happy to hear from members if you have ideas, suggestions, comments, improvements or criticisms regarding IASS activities and strategic priorities. Please get in touch with me at the email: [Natalie.shlomo@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Natalie.shlomo@manchester.ac.uk).

With best wishes,

**Natalie Shlomo**

President IASS, 2023-2025