



International Association for Official Statistics (IAOS)

Strategic Plan 2021- 2023



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Background

The world is undergoing major changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These have big implications for official statistics as new demands are placed on National Statistical Offices (NSOs) world-wide for more responsive and more real-time information. Statistical systems are also going through a period of change brought by the digital and data revolutions and rapid changes in national and global data and statistical ecosystems. At the same time, independence of official statistics and trust in official statistics continues to be at the forefront of minds. Many NSOs and National Statistical Systems (NSSs) are under stress as they are no longer seen as the only or key data producer in their country. Despite the emergence of new data producers, NSOs are to continue to prove that relevant, timely and reliable official statistics they produce remain fundamental to society. NSOs provide governments, businesses and civil society with the information they need to make decisions. They give people and their elected representatives the tools to have informed debates and make informed decisions. Statistics also provide opportunities to hold decision makers to account.

Data science and developments in technology mean that it is possible to use statistical science to gain more insights from data that were unimaginable only a few years ago. The global response to the recent COVID-19 pandemic and need to properly measure achievement or lack of it of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are highlighting the importance of robust statistics, resulting in high profile debates on statistics among statisticians, politicians, academia, civil society and the public.

The IAOS is one of the seven Associations of the International Statistical Institute (ISI)¹ and aligns itself with the ISI mid-term vision. The current political, economic and social developments present the IAOS with an opportunity to rise in prominence as the IAOS is an organization not only for statisticians working for national governments and international organizations, but for many other stakeholders, including policy makers, private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and academia.

¹ ISI's mission is to lead, support and promote the understanding, development and good practice of statistics worldwide, by providing the core global network for statistics.

The ISI vision is to increase its influence as the leading professional organization and core network for statistics worldwide linking government, academia, business and society. This vision is reflected in the ISI's motto: "Statistical science for a better world".



Context

IAOS objectives are:

- to promote the understanding and advancement of official statistics and related subjects, and fundamental principles of official statistics.
- to foster the development of effective and efficient official statistical services, particularly in developing countries, through international contacts among individuals and organizations, including users of official statistics as well as research institutions.²
- To contribute to efforts at establishing and maintaining a new global consensus on data.

Many of the trends highlighted in previous strategies continue. The Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics have been around for more than 25 years and have been recognized by virtually all countries. However, the political pressures remain a challenge.

The trend of populists criticizing experts had begun years before the COVID-19 pandemic and it was highlighted as an issue of concern in the 2019-2021 IAOS Strategy but that trend was only accelerated by the pandemic. The demand for data collected by health officials around the world was at historic highs as policymakers sought to make informed decisions about where to impose lockdowns and where to direct resources. However, political pressure to manipulate data and efforts from elected officials to suppress data on the pandemic and other global challenges, including climate changes, etc., were reported in several instances.

The pandemic also created significant challenges to the normal operations of official statistics. The 2020 Population and Housing Census Round kicked off as many countries were under lockdown, faced concerns about face-to-face follow-up or where promotion for participation in censuses was interrupted. Many household survey programs were paused or moved to new technologies to allow for virtual data collection. Administrative data collection was disrupted as many ministries moved to remote working. For economic statistics, the disruption in global supply chains and shifts in demand further reflected challenges in statistical offices. Assessments of the quality of official statistics produced during the disruptions of the pandemic and understanding the lessons learned due to adaptations to the pandemic will likely be of significant interest in the short and medium term. The World Bank and the United Nations Statistical Division, in coordination with the five UN Regional Commissions, has monitored the impact of the pandemic on the activities of NSOs through several surveys. While posing challenges to the operations of official statistics, the pandemic has also created opportunities for NSSs in terms of new data sources, new modes of operation, etc., which will too have a big

² <http://www.iaos-isi.org/index.php/about-us/foundation-and-objectives>



impact on the production process for official statistics in a longer term. Furthermore, with the accelerated access for data, there is a growing demand for NSOs to play a greater leading role in the NSSs.

All of this has happened within the context of what appears to be continued progress in the capacity of the NSSs. As noted in the previous IAOS Strategy, many countries struggle to monitor even half of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators. The demand for official statistics continues to expand beyond the need to track the SDGs to provide data from a growing group of stakeholders interested in using data for commercial, research or advocacy purposes. At that, new data sources and techniques are also seen as opportunities for NSOs to build on their capacity.

In its work, the IAOS operates under the management and guidance of the Executive Committee (EXCO). The EXCO is composed of the Officers who are a President, a President-Elect, four EXCO Members, and the Director of the Permanent Office of the ISI (ex-officio) acting as the Executive Director and Treasurer. The EXCO 2021-2023 has co-opted three further members of the IAOS, and several special invitees who will serve until the next election (see Annex 1 for the list of EXCO members 2021-2023). In general, the EXCO meets four times a year and organizes a general assembly once a year as per the IAOS statute. To address issues of importance the EXCO may, according to article 6.2, appoint standing and ad hoc committees.

Activities

Activity 1. Organization of IAOS International Conferences

Traditionally, the IAOS conducts a conference every two years. Due to the impact of the pandemic, the most recent IAOS conference was the 16th IAOS conference which was held in September 2018 in Paris in collaboration with the OECD. The 2021-2023 period will be unique for the IAOS, as we plan to organize two IAOS conferences.

The next conference will be organized jointly with the Statistics Poland and will be held in Krakow, Poland, on April 26-28, 2022. The theme of the 2022 conference will be "Worthy Information for Challenging Times". That means the 2019, 2020 and 2021 there were no IAOS conferences. The IAOS conference in Zambia, which was originally planned for May 2020 as the 17th IAOS conference and a regional ISI event, has been postponed. It is now hoped that it may be held in early 2023 in Livingstone, Zambia. The theme of the conference is "Better Lives 2030: Mobilizing the Power of Data for Africa and the World." More details on timing will be provided as decisions are taken. If this is the case the 2019-2021 conference gap will be followed by conferences in three consecutive years: Poland (2022), Zambia (2023) and 2024 organized by the next IAOS President.

Further details on the IAOS conferences to be held in Poland and Zambia are provided in Annex 2.



Activity 2. Publication (printed and on-line) of the Statistical Journal of the IAOS (SJIAOS)

Scientific journals serve as knowledge disseminators. In this sense, the Statistical Journal of the IAOS (SJIAOS) is a fundamental tool for the IAOS. The IAOS will continue to provide the world with innovative research on official statistics through this medium.

The SJIAOS will continue its work through its editorial team and reviewers who contribute their expertise without charge.

The main aim of the SJIAOS will continue to be to support the IAOS mission by publishing articles to promote the understanding and advancement of official statistics and to foster the development of effective official statistical services on a global basis. In doing so, the IAOS 2021/2023 strategic plan aims concretely to:

- Maintain its role in advancing official statistics by publishing on relevant and/or innovative topics that concern domains or the governance in general of official statistics
- Maintain its role as the main global platform for publishing on issues of relevance for official statistics
- Expand the audience, the group of contributors and its exposure.
- Attract innovative research and encourage new talent to publish in the SJIAOS.
- Encourage discussion of SDG indicators and other emerging issues important to official statistics.

The website of the Statistical Journal (www.officialstatistics.com) will maintain its important role as access to the on-line version so the Journal as well as the platform for relevant discussions and announcement of events and conferences.

Activity 3. Young Statisticians Prize

To encourage more young statisticians under 35 years old to take an active interest in official statistics, the IAOS will continue the Young Statisticians Prize (YSP), an annual competition for the best paper in the field of official statistics written by a young statistician. In addition to a monetary prize, the first place receives travel funds to present their paper at a mutually agreed international conference with a strong IAOS presence. Winning papers are also eligible to be published in a future issue of the SJIAOS.

Attracting submissions to the Prize is an annual challenge. While 2021 YSP winners have been selected, IAOS will ensure the competition is widely promoted through the IAOS website, social media channels and letters addressed to the heads of the NSOs and International Statistical Organizations (ISOs) as well as the Chief Methodologist Network to attract submissions for 2022 and 2023.

Activity 4. Increase the Membership and Improve IAOS Financial Picture

The IAOS will undertake activities aimed at increasing the visibility of the IAOS and highlight and promote the benefits of membership in the IAOS among statistical organizations, private sector (data producers and users) and other communities involved in data activities. IAOS will approach NSOs, statistical units of international



and regional institutions (CCSA members) and companies in the area of statistics, and others. IAOS will work in collaboration with other ISI associations and the ISI statistical capacity building committee to organize technical assistance activities, training sessions and webinars.

The IAOS has enjoyed the support of donors in the past, especially in supporting attendees from developing countries to participate in events. We will actively approach donor communities – multilateral and bilateral organizations and private donors to raise funds to expand IAOS operations – providing technical assistance, organizing conferences and webinars and supporting statisticians from developing countries to participate in events.

Activities will include a communications campaign using multiple channels and platforms as well as collaboration activities, including reinvigorating the IAOS website and exploring opportunities for cross-linking, email and social media marketing, advertising the 2022 and 2023 IAOS conferences, and hosting webinars, etc. These activities are expected to increase and diversify institutional membership, encourage individual membership and improve collaboration with statistical institutions, academia, international organizations, private sector and donor communities.

Activity 5. Strengthen Communication with Stakeholders

To maintain constant communication with NSOs around the world, a digital newsletter signed by the IAOS President will be sent approximately every three months to the heads of NSOs, ISOs and institutional and individual members. The newsletters will contain information about the IAOS and its projects (the SJIAOS, 2022 and 2023 conferences, the Young Statisticians Prize, training sessions and webinars) and will invite the general staff of NSOs to join the IAOS.

Additionally, the IAOS will keep promoting its work and activities through the ISI website, their monthly newsletter and via social media platforms, such as, Facebook and Twitter.

The website of the SJIAOS (www.officialstatistics.com) will, beyond the published and most recent issues and manuscripts, provide also information on for the official statistics community relevant international conferences and events and also offer a discussion platform for the community dot discuss and comment on common relevant themes.

To promote the IAOS among NSOs and universities, a dedicated communication will be sent out to concerned NSO and university representatives worldwide.

Activity 6. Contribute to the Promotion and Defense of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

The IAOS is a natural organization to contribute with and support the relevant organizations such as the UN Statistical Commission, regional economic commissions and some member countries, in adhering to and advancing the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. The IAOS should particularly focus on the ISI to promote and defend the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. These principles are essential for the



production of statistics. The IAOS should participate in their promotion and--together with the ISI-- defend statistical integrity and ethical standards, monitor the applicability of the fundamental principles, stating a position in case of an evident violation of the fundamental principles.

Raising awareness of the effects of violation of the main principles of official statistics by politics especially in developing countries.

The EXCO will continue to work with the ISI Ethics Committee and EXCO members will be asked to collect the trends in official statistics in their own regions and forward it to the EXCO. Also, to report successful cases as well as cases of violation of the fundamental principles.

Activity 7. Expose facts of Misuse of Statistics

IAOS will give a high priority to following and monitoring the use and misuse of statistics and exert efforts to expose facts of misuse of statistics, when needed and feasible. Following well received webinars and side events organized by the IAOS on the issues of use and misuse of statistics, the IAOS will continue to discuss these issues in webinars and by other means of communications. These topics will be discussed at the IAOS conferences in 2022 and 2023 as well in ISI and other conferences where appropriate. IAOS EXCO will constitute a reference group to work on these issues. In this work the EXCO will collaborate closely with IAOS members and other stakeholders to create a permanent system to expose and monitor misuse of official statistics.

Activity 8. Enhance the Work of Subcommittees

Existing subcommittees, such as SCORUS (Standing Committee on Regional and Urban Statistics), will be strengthened to allow for further development of their activities:

- Organizing conferences, seminars and webinars on regional and urban statistics
- Providing an internet platform for the continuous exchange of knowledge and of ideas
- Trying to enlarge the participation of users (researchers, policy makers, consultants) and producers (at municipal, regional, national and international level) of regional and urban statistics in this worldwide exchange of experience and ideas
- Promoting the exchange and co-operation on topics of common interest

Efforts will be made to further develop subcommittees and task forces.

Activity 9. Institutionalize IAOS Functions

Insuring organizational readiness through close working relationship with organizations through exchange of ideas, substantive content, working practices and administrative procedures that is response to the stakeholder's need of official statistics.



Efforts to document, archive and disseminate (where necessary) all IAOS working procedures and protocols are of the utmost importance. This is more challenging as the work of the IAOS is mostly conducted by volunteers. Standard methodologies and systems to document and archive IAOS outputs are crucial to ensure continuity and facilitate further developments.

ANNEX 1: EXCO 2021-2023

MEMBERS				
<i>Nr</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Position</i>
1.	Mr. Misha Belkindas	USA	America	President
2.	Mr. Dominik Rozkrut	Poland	Europe	President-Elect
3.	Ms. Lisa Bersales	Philippines	Asia	First term
4.	Mr. Peter Popoola	Nigeria	Africa	Second term
5.	Mr. Qasem Said Alzoubi	Jordan	Arab	First term
6.	Mr. Gary Dunnet	New Zealand	Oceania	First term
7.	Ms. Ada Van Krimpen	Netherlands	Europe	ISI Director

CO-OPTED MEMBERS				
<i>Nr</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Position</i>
1.	Mr. Rolando Ocampo	Mexico	LAC	Latin American and the Caribbean Representative
2.	Mr. Jan Robert Suesser	France	Europe	Programme Chair of the IAOS 2022 Conference Poland
3.	Mr. Steve MacFeely	Switzerland	Europe	IAOS Representative to the ISI

SPECIAL INVITEES				
<i>Nr</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Position</i>
1.	Mr. Pieter Everaers	Austria	Europe	Editor in Chief, SJIAOS
2.	Ms. Teodora Brandmueller	Luxembourg	Europe	SCORUS Chair
3.	Ms. Nancy McBeth	New Zealand	Oceania	Special Advisor to the President
4.	Ms. Gemma Van Halderen	Australia	Oceania	Young Statisticians Prize



5.	Mr. Ronald Jansen	USA	America	UNSD
6.	Mr. Oliver Chinganya	Zambia	Africa	Programme Chair of the IAOS 2020 Conference in Zambia

Lilia Saetova – Assistant to the President



ANNEX 2: IAOS Conferences

2.1. Zambia IAOS 2020 Conference - Better Lives 2030: Mobilizing the Power of Data for Africa and the World

Previously planned for May 19-21, 2020 but postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is now hoped that the 17th IAOS conference and 2nd ISI Regional Statistics Conference may be held in early 2023 in Livingstone, Zambia. It was going to be the first time an African country hosted an IAOS conference.

The conference will bring together participants from a wide range of backgrounds who are involved in the production and use of statistics across various sectors. This will include statisticians and the academia (i.e., universities and other statistical training institutions), the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) among others. The conference is organized by the IAOS and ISI in collaboration with the Zambia Statistics Agency (ZamStats), formerly the Central Statistical Office of Zambia.

The following seven themes have been selected for the conference:

1. *Future of Statistics for Africa: statistics that leave no one behind:*

- How can statistics help guide decision makers to realize the Agenda 2063 vision?
- How can statistics assist in understanding who is getting left behind and what needs to be done to ensure that they are not?
- How are we realizing the benefits of the data revolution? Are we prepared for future changes in the data ecosystem?
- The 2020 Census round is in full swing. The census is a once-in-a-decade opportunity to ensure that all are counted. What is the future for the census?
- Where should we be going with surveys and use of administrative data?
- What is the future role of non-official sources of data? What new methods will we need?

2. *Skills for Africa in the era of data:*

- Equipping our children to succeed in a data rich world. What are the skills they need and how can we ensure that they are developed?
- Statistical offices struggle to develop and retain junior staff. How can we ensure that the future of official statistics is safeguarded by bringing on the next generation of professional staff?
- How can we address leader's needs to understand the potential of data and data analytics? Leaders in statistics increasingly need to have deep technical credibility, strong management competence and the ability to navigate a complex and hazardous political landscape. How can we support them in getting the skills they need?
- The public often receive official statistics through the medium of journalism. How can we support journalists to write better, more compelling (and accurate) stories about numbers?
- To be an effective citizen we need to be able to make sense of statistics and to be skeptical of statistical claims. How do we foster statistical literacy for all?

3. *Official statistics in society: they matter to all of us:*

- How do we communicate the role of official statistics and engage with politicians, media and civil society? How do we address issues of autonomy, independence and relevance and protect the position of the national statistics office and its leaders?
- To help decision makers, statistics need to connect with politicians and be able to be used to hold them to account. What are the mechanisms that support this?
- For official statistics to truly serve democracy, good engagement is also needed with the media and civil society. How can we work together?
- How do we make the case for autonomy and independence for official statistics and find a voice that protects the position of the national statistics office and its leaders?

4. Big data. Opportunities arising from the new data ecosystem:

- How can we make a success of partnerships and coordination in the emerging data ecosystem?
- Capacity within the system is far below what is needed to respond to the agenda in front of us. How do we make the case for resources, develop new business models that better match demand and supply and find ways to enhance the capability of the system?
- The new ecosystem demands new rules. What part can statisticians play in areas like data ethics where we have both much to offer and much to learn if we are to navigate successfully and sustain public confidence?

5. Statistics making a difference: public health, prevent and cure:

- Topics covered in this strand will address in particular Africa's public health crisis, the world's most acute one.

6. Statistics making a difference: environment and climate:

Several SDGs point to the urgency to face the climate crises which we have produced ourselves:

- SDG 6 aims to achieve clean, accessible water for all
- SDG 7 calls for affordable and clean energy
- SDG 13 states that the world needs climate actions, because climate change is a global challenge that affects everyone, everywhere.
- SDG 14 promotes a careful management of our oceans and of life under water, as a global resource for all.
- SDG 15 is about life on land, and the importance to protect forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss.
- What are the challenges, opportunities and best practices in the production of environment and climate statistics?

7. Statistics making a difference: from data to progress:

- Topics covered in this strand will focus on exploiting data for progress and development and propose methods and algorithms which allow understanding and predicting systems and processes.
- An important subtheme is statistical education and training of new generations, to deliver statistical competence and capacity for progress.



The conference programme has been designed to deliver:

- A forward-looking prospectus for statistics to help improve decision making over the next 10 years
- An opportunity to bring together diverse communities to foster innovation and partnership.
- A focus on Africa through Agenda 2063 and the SDGs
- Capacity building in Zambia and across the region

Sixteen (16) of the papers submitted for the conference were published in a special issue of the SJIAOS which was to be used at the conference.

Members of the Scientific Programme Committee of the conference were:

IAOS 2020 Conference Scientific Programme Committee				
No	Name	Country	Region	Position - Organization
1.	Mr. Oliver Chinganya	Zambia	Africa	Programme Chair - UNECA
2.	Dr. Arnaldo Frigessi	Norway	Europe	Member Co-Chair
3.	Dr. Jean Louis Bodin	France	Europe	Member
4.	Prof. Ben Kiregyera	Uganda	Africa	Member
5.	Mr. Gary Dunnet	New Zealand	Oceania	Member
6.	Mr. Eduardo Barredo Capelot		Europe	Member
7.	Prof. Denise Lievesley	United Kingdom	Europe	Member
8.	Mr. Hallgrimur Snorrason	Iceland	Europe	Member
9.	Mr. Pali Lehohla	South Africa	Africa	Member
10.	Ms. Irena Križman	Slovenia	Europe	Member
11.	Mr. Mohd Uzir Mahidin	Malaysia	Asia	Member

2.2. Poland IAOS 2022 Conference – Worthy Information for Challenging Times

The 18th IAOS conference will be organized by the IAOS jointly with the Statistics Poland in Krakow, Poland, on April 26-28, 2022. The theme of the 2022 conference will be “Worthy Information for Challenging Times”.

Conference Information Note

The responses of societies and economies to the short- and long-term consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic are taking place within the challenges of climate change and the international commitments to leave no one behind. Data, and in particular Official Statistics, are key to these responses.



Yet with multiple sources and providers, it is often difficult to differentiate the good from the bad, the trustworthy from the unreliable, the relevant from the noise.

In these times, achieving relevance and enhancing trust in information is a fundamental challenge facing Official Statistics. It requires a multi-strand approach.

The seven strands for the conference reflect this approach, recognizing that Official Statistics needs to respond to:

- the need to build shared data governance in a time of the data deluge.
- ethical challenges that go with the booming role played by data in societies and economies.
- producing valuable information for policymaking and for public debate, in ways that bring value to users.
- new and emerging statistical methodologies and technologies able to provide good statistics.

The strands are:

1. Integrating available Data Sources for Official Statistics: Challenges and Opportunities

This strand will include challenges in dealing with “not-statistically oriented” data sources, and integrating these across the different domains (economic, social and environment).

2. Backbone of Official Statistics: Critical Sources, Infrastructure, Resources

This strand will examine challenges and responses in ensuring that the unique assets of Official Statistics can take advantage of the data deluge.

3. Official Statistics Addressing Global Objectives (SDGs, Climate change...)

This strand will focus on interactions between Official Statistics outputs and global agendas.

4. Official Statistics and Covid-19: key takeaways

This strand will review how the responses to the major disruptions experienced by Official Statistics due to the pandemic have been relevant and how they might have positive long-lasting benefits.

5. Abundance of Data for Official Statistics’ Uses: Meeting the Ethical Challenges

Availability and possible use of new data sources is raising ethical challenges for Official Statistics. The pandemic has highlighted some of them. This strand focuses on understanding these challenges and responses.

6. Statistics in a Time of Distrust and Misuse: The Communication Challenge

This strand will examine challenges in communicating Official Statistics at a time of data desire but also data rejection. It will review the respective contributions played by reputation, independence, reliability and relevance.

7. Official Statistics Contribution for a Global Data Governance

In an ever-expanding data ecosystem, Official Statistics aims at taking a pivotal role in Data Governance. This strand will examine the implications for Official Statistics from local, national and international perspectives.

The Scientific Programme Committee (SPC) for the conference is integrated, ensuring regional representation and gender balance, by the following members:

IAOS 2022 Conference Scientific Programme Committee			
Nr	Name	Country	Origin – Organization

1.	Mr. Jan Robert Suesser	France	Programme Chair
2.	Ms. Jurate Petrauskiene	Lithuania	Statistics Lithuania
3.	Mr. Michael Yang	USA	NORC at the University of Chicago
4.	Mr. Gary Dunnet	New Zealand	Stat New Zealand Tatauranga Aotearoa
5.	Ms. Hasnae Fdhil	Morocco	High Commission for Planning
6.	Ms. Denise Britz do Nascimento Silva	Brazil	IGBE - Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística
7.	Mr. Albert Motivans	USA	Foundation Equal Measures 2030
8.	Ms. Lucia Spoiala	Moldova	National Bureau of Statistics
9.	Mr. Pietro Gennari	Italy	Statistics Division at FAO (Office of Chief Statistician)
10.	Ms. Acha Kelechi Chigozie	Nigeria	Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike
11.	Ms. Denise Lievesley	United Kingdom	Green Templeton College, University of Oxford
12.	Ms. Susie Fortier	Canada	Statistics Canada
13.	Ms. Elise Coudin	France	Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques (INSEE)
14.	Mr. Adrian Franco	Mexico	National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics (INEGI)
15.	Ms. Monica Scannapieco	Italy	Istituto nazionale di statistica (Istat)
16.	Mr. Charles Lufumpa	Zambia	Official Statistician
17.	Mr. Włodzimierz Okrasa	Poland	Scientific Statistical Council at GUS - Główny Urząd Statystyczny
18.	Ms. Mariana Kotzeva	EU	Eurostat
19.	Mr. Emanuele Baldacci	EU	Eurostat
20.	Mr. Eugeniusz Gatnar	Poland	University of Economy of Poznan
21.	Ms. Elżbieta Gołata	Poland	University of Economy of Poznan