



International Association for Official Statistics (IAOS)

Strategic Plan 2017- 2019



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Background

Official Statistics – understood as the production of statistical information by government agencies –are of the utmost importance to inform societies about relevant social, economic and environmental phenomena.

National Statistical Offices (NSOs) play a fundamental role in this process both as direct producers and publishers of statistical information and as coordinators of National Statistical Systems. NSOs are the main repositories of technical knowledge for statistical information and together with the other public bodies providing statistical information, are accountable to their governments and, in democratic societies, to the public in general as they are using public funds to accomplish their remits.

International organisations, in close coordination with NSOs, gather statistical information from countries. They also play a role in supporting the capacity of countries through methodologies, training, resources and serving as fora for the debate and dissemination of ideas and the coordination of international projects, among other functions.

Users of official statistical information are of particular importance as official statistics have to respond to the different demands of society in this respect. Private institutions and associations, businesses, NGOs, media, social networks, universities and society in general can interrelate closely in the statistical milieu. They can be users and disseminators of information, and some of them can undertake the production of data though this would not generally be considered official information.

Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

NSOs, government agencies and international organisations are subject to the fundamental principles of statistics approved by the Statistical Commission, ECOSOC and the General Assembly of the UN which unanimously adopted them in January 2014.

The fundamental principles lay the foundations and ground rules that official statistics must follow: relevance, impartiality, independence, access, accountability, transparency, confidentiality. They constitute the core elements of quality, trust and accountability for producers of official statistical information.

Challenges

Producers of official statistics - NSOs in particular- face different challenges. Traditionally they could be summarised as the challenges related to resources, relevance and new technologies, which are interconnected between themselves.

Resources have always been important as they are indispensable to deliver on remits, undertake projects and attract talented people. In a world of limited budgets, the official statistics have to



compete for scarce public resources, that will ultimately depend on the standing of the institution and the priority of particular official statistics in the Budget assignment process, which takes us to the second challenge, that of relevance.

Information has to have an effect on society. Producers of official statistics do not generate data for its own sake, it should be useful for a wide variety of stakeholders. In particular, the use of official statistics for the design, implementation and evaluation of public policies has to be a core objective for their producers.

Relevance understood in this way, directly affects the resources an agency can aspire to, as the policymakers in charge of preparing a budget will not assign funds to projects they do not find indispensable for public policies.

Producers of official statistics have dealt with technological challenges for a long time, but nowadays this has taken new dimensions. In the 1970's and 1980's, NSOs and other agencies had to adapt to the use of computers and the internet in an environment where they risked becoming mediocre institutions vis a vis the most developed ones.

Technology has been developing rapidly and increasingly in the last decades. This is changing the terms of reference for official statistics in general. Big data, new statistical packages and the widespread use of social networks are changing the environment in previously unthought ways. Some other technological advances will keep coming, some of them for sure unimaginable today.

The open availability of information and technological tools makes possible for new actors with resources to substitute, in some cases, the role of agencies producing and publishing official statistics. The risks are magnified not only for the latter but also for society in general as there is not necessarily a guarantee on the statistical quality of this information.

Producers of official statistical information will have to engage with both the new technological developments and with these new actors interested in the production and publishing of statistics in ways that endeavour to combine resources and that are beneficial for society.

Another aspect official statistics has to deal with is the change of the post-truth environment in public perception, which may have the effect of discrediting statistical authorities around the world.

New requirements for information. The SDGs.

Producers of official statistics have to continually respond to new requirements for information, examples would be small area measurements, individualized and tailored information, innovative methodologies and upcoming phenomena, among others.

The Agenda 2030 clearly reflects the worldwide needs for new information and the great efforts that agencies have to undertake to fulfil the production of indicators for national and international



reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs. The SDGs will probably constitute the main international reference for the work of statistical agencies in the foreseeable future.

The SDGs have had two immediate beneficial effects as they provide a thematic synthesis of challenges ahead and also a focalized objective of action, both within countries and at regional and global levels.

Producers of information together with international organisations will play an important role in the coordination of the efforts for the measurement of SDGs.

International Association for Official Statistics (IAOS)

The IAOS is one of the seven associations of the International Statistical Institute (ISI). It was founded in 1985 and has as its primary objectives to promote the understanding and advancement of official statistics and related subjects; and 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.

With the release of the ISI Strategy 2017 -2021, the ISI has recently set out a medium-term vision and goals, to help guide priorities. The objectives of the IAOS, described below are aligned to these objectives and goals, although obviously with a strong focus on the Official Statistical community.

The IAOS is committed to the universal ethical values and good practices as expressed in the ISI Declaration on Professional Ethics for Statisticians and the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.

The ISI Head Office acts as ex-officio secretariat and provides crucial support and advice in administrative work and other aspects of its organisation such as the conferences, financial and membership management.

The IAOS depends on the volunteer work of its Executive Committee, where members are commonly supported by the National Statistical Offices they belong to. In addition, several members are highly renowned actors in the statistical field who after retirement keep contributing to this area by cooperating with IAOS.

To be relevant to its membership IAOS constitutes the forum for the analysis, discussion and promotion of the most important current and future trends in official statistics. The main instruments are its biennial conference, the Statistical Journal of the IAOS (SJIAOS), the Young Statisticians Prize (YSP) offered to people younger than 35 years of age working at agencies producing official statistics and the new Young Scholars for Better Statistics award which will be offered for the first time in 2018 together with the OECD.

SWOT Analysis

IAOS STRENGTHS					
Strategic	Organisation	Conferences	Statistical Journal of the IAOS (SJIAOS)	Awards: -Young Statistician Prize (YSP) -Young Scholars for Better Statistics (YSBS)	Support to members
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -One of diverse fora about statistics - but the main one focused on official statistics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Membership has shown an increase in the last three years (20% from 2015 to 2016). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Regularly conducts standalone conferences supported by members (developing and developed countries). -Major player in WSC activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Important tool for sharing good practices of official statistics. -Key role in retaining and attracting members. -Team continuing good work and strong relationship with IAOS. -Increasing number and quality of articles. -Unique outlet for manuscripts focusing on official statistics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Important role in capacity building and increasing awareness. -Role in recruiting younger members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Regular communication to members. -New website in place.
IAOS WEAKNESSES					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Rationale for originally setting up IAOS not as relevant in 2017. -Not visible as international player in activities such as UNSC or regional equivalents (e.g. UNECE). -Limited formal engagement on major Official Statistics policy/direction issues. -Tends to be forum for engagement between official statisticians not forum for engagement across official statistics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Reliant on small number of volunteers. -Linkages between activities are not well understood. -Appear to have limited opportunity to influence wider ISI directions - including those that impact on IAOS (e.g. UNSC session on role of NSOs). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -In most cases, conference attendees tend to be, from the host country or from the surrounding region. -Attendance from developed countries declining. -In some cases, conferences have suffered from being too broad - paper proposals suggest need to be clearer on points of difference. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Relies on volunteers to serve as editor-in-chief and associate editors. -Editors must work with authors to get papers up to publication standards (quality of submissions vary greatly). -Editors must manage reviews in many areas of expertise (focus of readership is broad). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Declining numbers of entries in the YSP. -Authors who do not have English as first language not well supported by their own institutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Dependent on ISI for many membership issues. -Limited use of social media as communication tool. -Unclear what members want (lack of feedback system).

IAOS OPPORTUNITIES					
Strategic	Organisation	Conferences	Statistical Journal of the IAOS (SJIAOS)	Awards: -Young Statistician Prize (YSP) -Young Scholars for Better Statistics (YSBS)	Support to members
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All countries signed up to The Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics in 2014. -Improvement of official statistics - key to Agenda 2030. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Chance to get into student market through student strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synergies with OECD for the 2018 Conference. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> --Increase exposure to a wider group of people interested in official statistics. -Promote/support other IAOS activities. -Achieve recognition as the preeminent journal for official statistics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Joint IAOS-OECD award including recognition for academic advisors (YSBS). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Have chance to take over some social media sites (e.g. LinkedIn site). -Needs enthusiastic people interested in using social media.
IAOS THREATS					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Rise of Populism and less 'evidence based decision making' major threat to official statistics. -Less international engagement from traditional strong NSOs, due to budget constraints. -New actors with resources that produce statistics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Niche organisations emerging. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Limited range of countries willing to host IAOS meetings. -International conference timetable very crowded. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Number of manuscripts may decline if NSOs lack funding to support conference participation and papers preparation. -Manuscripts are solicited primarily from non-academic environments that do not encourage scholarly publication in a peer reviewed journal - impacts quantity and quality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Not enough entrants due to lack of interest. 	



Strategic Objectives for 2017-2019

The IAOS strategic objectives for 2017-2019 build on the previous plan, the SWOT analysis and the new ISI Strategic Plan. They seek to promote the understanding and advancement of official statistics, and 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.

The following section presents the strategic objectives, targets and measures that the IAOS will carry on to fulfil its mission. Every action is described in detail in the following section. It also describes how every objective of the IAOS will seek to aid the ISI in developing its strategic plan.

Strategic objective 1

Provide its membership and producers and users of statistical information in general, with a forum for the analysis and discussion of the most relevant issues of official statistics.

Targets

- 1.1 Be at the vanguard in the analysis and discussion of official statistics.
- 1.2 Align IAOS conference's themes to the most important issues of official statistics.
- 1.3 Increase IAOS member participation in the IAOS conference.
- 1.4 Follow and participate in the development of the SDGs.
- 1.5 Encourage the analysis of emerging issues.

ISI Strategic Plan. This objective will contribute to the ISI Strategic Objectives 1, 2, 3, 6 and 8.

Strategic Objective 2

Be a recognised vehicle for spreading knowledge in official statistics.

Targets

- 2.1 Increase the number of citations to articles published in SJIAOS.
- 2.2 Positioned SJIAOS in at least the third quartile for statistics, probability and uncertainty.
- 2.3 Attract innovative researchers and new talent to publish in the SJIAOS.
- 2.4 Encourage the discussion of SDGs indicators and emerging issues in the SJIAOS.

ISI Strategic Plan. This objective will contribute to the ISI Strategic Objective 4.



Strategic Objective 3

Increase and diversify IAOS membership.

Targets

- 3.1 Increase the number of young people enrolled in the IAOS.
- 3.2 Increase the number of students enrolled in the IAOS.
- 3.3 Increase the number of institutional members enrolled in the IAOS.
- 3.4 Encourage the greater participation of existing IAOS members.

ISI Strategic Plan. This objective will contribute to the ISI Strategic Objectives 7 and 8.

Strategic objective 4

Invest in creating mutual beneficial Partnerships.

Targets

- 4.1 Increase the number of international, regional and national partners involved in the undergoing work of the IAOS.
- 4.2 Increase the IAOS presence among NSOs and other producers of statistical information.
- 4.3 Participate actively in international fora devoted to official statistics.

ISI Strategic Plan. This objective will contribute to the ISI Strategic Objectives 1 and 5.

Strategic Objective 5

Strengthen communications with relevant actors related to official statistics.

Targets

- 5.1 Enhance and improve communication with members.
- 5.2 Enhance and improve communication with the heads of NSOs and other statistical fora.
- 5.3 Overhaul and improve the IAOS website based on user's needs.
- 5.4 Strengthen the links with academia.
- 5.5 Increase the presence of the IAOS in social networks

ISI Strategic Plan. This objective will contribute to the ISI Strategic Objective 8.



Strategic objective 6

Contribute to the promotion and defence of the fundamental principles of official statistics.

Targets

6.1 Follow the trends in official statistics by regions.

6.2 Support the work of ISI in defending statistical integrity and ethical standards.

6.3 Work with the ISI Ethics Committee to report successful cases and cases of violation of the fundamental principles.

ISI Strategic Plan. This objective will contribute to the ISI Strategic Objective 3.

Strategic objective 7

Institutionalize IAOS functions.

Targets

7.1 Continue to elaborate written and well documented protocols related to IAOS's committees, functions of the IAOS president, functions of the IAOS president-elect, nomination of IAOS host countries, YSP competition, budgetary, reporting.

7.2 Establish sustainable financial model for IAOS.

ISI Strategic Plan. This objective will contribute to the ISI Strategic Objective 9.

Strategic objective 8

Strengthen links with the ISI family.

Targets

8.1 Actively support the ISI in the implementation of the ISI Strategy 2017 -2021

8.2 Enhance membership participation in the WSC and Regional Statistical Conferences

ISI Strategic Plan. This objective will contribute to the ISI Strategic Objective 1.



IAOS Main Activities, 2017 - 2019

Activity 1. Organization of the IAOS international Conference.

The 16th edition of the IAOS Conference will be jointly organized with the OECD on their premises in Paris from 19-21 September 2018. For the first time the biennial IAOS conference will partner with one of the leading international organizations.

The theme of the IAOS 2018 Conference will be: *Better Statistics for Better Lives*, which serves as an umbrella topic to discuss the most relevant present and future issues for official statistics. Among the diverse sub-themes and topics that will be part of this edition are:

- Sustainability:
 - Environmental sustainability;
 - Capital approach to sustainability and well-being;
 - Social capital, social connections;
 - Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

- Well-being and quality of life:
 - Measurement of well-being, happiness and life satisfaction;
 - Measurement problems in quality of life;
 - International differences in well-being;
 - Quality of work and jobs;
 - Governance, security and drugs.

- The future role/position of official statistics:
 - Regional and local statistics for better lives;
 - Actual use of statistics for better lives;
 - Statistics and evidence-based policy making;
 - Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
 - The future role/position of official statistics;

- Digitalization and globalization:
 - (Local) effects of globalization on people's lives;
 - The impact of digitalization on people's lives;
 - Measurement of digitalization;
 - The mis-measurement of economic statistics hypothesis.

- Other topics:
 - Quality of education;
 - Trust in institutions;
 - Economic topics;



The Scientific Programme Committee (SPC) for the conference is integrated, ensuring regional representation, by the following members.

- Emanuele Baldacci - Director of Methodology, IT and Corporate Statistical Services, Eurostat.
- Lisa Bersales - National Statistician of the Philippines.
- Cynthia Clark - Senior executive leader and manager of statistical programs in the U.S. and the U.K., USA.
- Jean-Pierre Cling - Head of the Department of Statistical and International Coordination at INSEE, France.
- Gary Dunnet - Senior Manager of National Accounts, Statistics New Zealand.
- Philomen Harrison - Project Director, Regional Statistics, Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat.
- Ronald Jansen - Chief of the Trade Statistics Branch of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD).
- Jean- Pierre Le Gléau - French Statistical Society (SFdS), France.
- Yusuf Murangwa - Director General, National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda.
- Enrique Ordaz - General Director on Research and Analysis National Institute of Statistics and Geography, Mexico. Co-Chair of the Inter-agency Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs).
- Peter Van De Ven - Head of National Accounts at the Statistics Directorate (STD), OECD.
- Sybille Von Oppeln - Director of Strategy and Planning, International Relations, and Research and Communications, German Federal Statistical Office.
- Kees Zeelenberg (Chair) - Chief Methodologist, Statistics Netherlands.

Communication and meetings between the members of the SPC will take place permanently through electronic communications and through on site meetings. The first

This activity will contribute to the following IAOS targets;

- 1.1
- 1.2
- 1.3
- 1.4
- 1.5
- 2.3
- 4.3
- 4.1

one of this will take place during the World Statistical Congress (WSC) in Marrakech 2017.



Activity 2. Publication of the Statistical Journal of the IAOS (SJIAOS).

Scientific journals serve as knowledge disseminators. In this sense, the 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 excellent work through its editorial team and reviewers who contribute with 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. By doing this, the IAOS strategic plan aims at:

- Increasing the number of citations to articles published in SJIAOS
- Positioning SJIAOS in at least the third quartile of statistical peer-reviewed journals.
- Attract innovative research and new talent to publish in SJIAOS
- Encourage the discussion of SDGs indicators and emerging issues in official statistics in SJIAOS

This activity will contribute to the following IAOS targets:

- | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| ○ 1.1 | ○ 2.1 | ○ 3.1 | ○ 5.4 |
| ○ 1.2 | ○ 2.2 | ○ 3.2 | |
| ○ 1.4 | ○ 2.3 | | |
| | ○ 2.4 | | |

Activity 3. Young Members Recruitment Program – Young Scholars for Better Statistics IAOS-OECD award.

One of our priorities will be to increase the existing number of students that are members of IAOS. To do this, IAOS has designed a strategy aiming to increase the base of young IAOS members. The strategy will target all university students who may be interested in official statistics, either as consumers or as potential producers. Starting with the top 200 universities in the world (approximately 600 academic departments), we will contact the heads of the Statistics, Mathematics, Actuarial Science, Economics, Government departments, among others, to invite them, their students and academic staff to join IAOS and to participate in the **Young Scholars for Better Statistics IAOS-OECD award (YSBS)**.

This award aims to encourage young students and their academic advisors to take an active interest in official statistics. The IAOS and the OECD will jointly offer the YSBS. The candidates will have to present a paper that shows a clear contribution to the better understanding of official statistics, as well as their usefulness, challenges and potential



options to improve their production in a particular subject or field of analysis. This award will recognise the authors of the first three places and their academic advisors. In addition to monetary prizes, the first-place winner and their academic advisor will receive travel funds to present their paper at the 2018 IAOS-OECD Conference in Paris, France on 19-21 September 2018, which will be submitted for publication in the Journal.

The topics for the papers are the same as the ones of the conference.

This activity will contribute to the following IAOS targets:

- 3.1
- 3.2
- 3.3
- 5.4
- 5.5

Activity 4- Young Members Recruitment Program - Young Statisticians Prize (YSP)

To encourage more young statisticians under 35 years old to take an active interest in official statistics, the Young Statistician Prize (YSP) will continue to be a core element of IAOS for attracting young members.

A variety of means will be used to promote the competition, including IAOS' website, social media and letters addressed to the heads of the National Statistical Offices (NSOs).

Apart from publishing the winning papers in the Statistical Journal of the International Association for Official Statistics (SJIAOS), the winner of the 2018 and the 2019 editions, will receive travel funds to present the paper at one of the sessions of the IAOS 2018 Conference and at the World Statistical Congress 2019 respectively. These papers will be submitted for publication in the Journal. Finally, all the three first places will also receive cash prizes.

This activity will contribute to the following IAOS targets;

- 3.1
- 3.2
- 3.3
- 5.2

Activity 5. Increase and maintain communication with stakeholders.

To maintain a constant communication with all the directors of the National Statistical Offices in the world, a newsletter signed by the IAOS president will be sent approximately every two months to the heads of the NSOs and ISOs and their directors of international affairs. The letters will contain information about the IAOS and their projects (inscriptions,



Statistical Journal of the IAOS, 2018 Conference, Better Scholars for Better Statistics award, Young Statisticians Prize) and will invite NSOs' general staff to join the IAOS.

The same information that will be sent to the heads of the NSOs, will also be sent to actual members (institutional and individual) through individual communication and through the IAOS newsletter. Additionally, the IAOS will keep promoting its work and activities through the ISI website and monthly newsletter.

The IAOS will regularly post information about its work and official statistics in different social media:

- Facebook.
- Twitter.

To promote the IAOS among NSOs, the EXCO members will be asked to provide a list with the names and the titles of the heads of the NSOs and their directors of international affairs within their own regions

To promote the IAOS among universities, besides the 600 academic departments in the original list, the EXCO members will be asked for the names of the institutions in their own regions they think IAOS should approach.

This activity will contribute to the following IAOS targets:

- | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| ○ 1.1 | ○ 3.3 | ○ 4.2 | ○ 5.1 |
| ○ 1.2 | ○ 3.4 | | ○ 5.2 |
| ○ 1.3 | | | ○ 5.3 |
| ○ 1.4 | | | ○ 5.4 |
| ○ 1.5 | | | ○ 5.5 |

Activity 6. Contribute to the promotion and defence of the fundamental principles of official statistics.

IAOS is one natural organization to contribute with and support the relevant organizations such as the UN Statistical Commission, regional economic commissions and in particular the ISI in the promotion and defence of the fundamental principles of official statistics. These principles are essential for the production of statistics. The IAOS should participate in their promotion and together with ISI defend statistical integrity and ethical standards, stating a position in case of an evident violation of the fundamental principles.



The EXCO will continue to work with the ISI Ethics Committee and the 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 and in particular cases of violation of the fundamental principles.

This activity will contribute to the following IAOS targets:

- 1.1
- 1.2
- 1.4
- 1.5
- 4.1
- 4.2
- 6.1
- 6.2
- 6.3

Activity 7. Institutionalize IAOS functions.

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

This activity will contribute to the following targets;

- 7.1
- 7.2
- 8.1
- 8.2