

## President's Message – October 2018

### Survey of members of the whole ISI family

The ISI family includes the ISI and its Associations. Members of ISI and its seven Associations will soon be receiving an invitation to respond to an electronic survey of members. The survey is currently under test. The first electronic survey of ISI members was conducted in 2016. This first survey focused on a number of open-ended questions to encourage freedom of views, and to help frame future questions. Almost 90% of respondents took the opportunity to respond to at least one of these open-ended questions, and the Executive Committee and Council were very appreciative of the thoughts and feedback. ISI members' responses to the 2016 survey contributed greatly to the framing of [ISI's Strategy 2017-](#)



[2021](#). Because the 2016 survey was so well received, this 2018 survey will be sent to the whole ISI family of ISI and its seven Associations. We welcome all members of the whole ISI family to take this opportunity to provide input and feedback.

The 2018 survey includes some questions from the 2016 survey (for continuity), some questions using responses from the 2016 survey, and some questions specifically linked to the [Strategy](#). For example, the four general priority areas in the Strategy are:

1. Encourage statistical communication and networking
2. Increase the public voice of statistics
3. Develop statistical capacity
4. Secure our financial sustainability

We recommend that you browse the ISI Strategy. The 2018 survey also includes an optional non-anonymous section for those who wish to express an interest in greater participation in ISI activities.

ISI has been conducting electronic surveys of WSC (World Statistics Congress) participants since 2011, collecting factual information, opinions on WSC components and organisation, and, for most WSC's, open-ended comments. The information from such surveys must be interpreted in the context of the particular WSC but is very important in feeding into future planning. Having read all the open-ended comments since WSC 2011, and helped with reports for WSC 2011, 2013, I noticed that the WSC open-ended comments tend to be as expected from the common experience of the particular WSC, or highly individual and diverse to the point of being outliers.

In contrast, the responses to the open-ended questions of the 2016 members' survey, although individual and personal, could be substantially grouped into themes. Although none of the themes was particularly unexpected, the frequencies and emphases provided invaluable feedback from members. One important aspect was consistency within each member's survey, and members frequently focussed on comments for some questions with other questions getting the response of 'as before' or no response.

The overall strengths of ISI identified in the 2016 members' survey were its global span and quality nature. Comprehensiveness of statistical coverage, networking and links, quality and passion of members, excellence of 'umbrella' structure, integrity, history, diversity, World Statistics Congresses, genuine commitment to support and development, were just some types of responses. The themes in the 'yes' responses to the question of 'would you recommend ISI to a friend and why', comprised international importance, excellence, big family, professionalism, conferences, publications, opportunities (networking, young statisticians, developing countries), and included some wonderfully quotable quotes. My favourites were "Why not?", and, more seriously, "It is the really international organisation that covers (all) statisticians - it needs support, and statisticians need its presence to help in their work".

The 2018 survey will enable you to agree or disagree with such responses, as well as asking for your valuing on matters such as engagement, networking, public voice, types of news and communication mediums.

Many responses to the 2016 survey on opportunities and challenges reflected what is often seen – that these can be the two sides of the same coin, particularly in a truly international association and because of the diverse and pervasive nature of statistics. Diversity and globality each have both strengths and challenges. Networking, widening participation and the 'reach' of ISI are certainly core values in our work and plans across the whole extended family. As many members commented, simply belonging to a community helps to give that community strength – more members means greater strength. Similarly, feedback from members helps to give the community support and direction. We encourage all members of the whole ISI family to take this opportunity to provide input and feedback.

Helen MacGillivray  
ISI President