

Call for Papers
IAOS – OECD Conference “Better Statistics for Better Lives”
OECD Headquarters, Paris, September 19 – 21, 2018

The Scientific Programme Committee of the 2018 Conference, jointly organised by the International Association for Official Statistics (IAOS) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has selected the five themes below for the IAOS – OECD Conference “Better Statistics for Better Lives”, to be held at the OECD Headquarters in Paris, September 19 – 21, 2018. Under each of these themes, three sessions will be organised which can each accommodate three papers. You are invited to submit proposals for papers for these themes.

The web portal for submissions will be open effective October 6, 2017; <http://survey.oecd.org/Survey.aspx?s=d1f6751955e14a00b1cab2087e6051d2>.

The deadline for submissions is February 28, 2018.

If selected, the final papers need to be submitted by August 31, 2018.

Theme 1: Sustainability

Organisers: Lisa Bersales and Ronald Janssen

The term ‘sustainability’ or ‘sustainable development’ was fully established during the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 in Rio de Janeiro. That conference is better known as Rio+20, and its outcome document is titled “the Future we want”. People are at the centre of sustainable development. In “the Future we want”, the promise was made to strive for a world that is just, equitable and inclusive, and the commitment was made to work together to promote sustained and inclusive economic growth, social development and environmental protection. To achieve a just balance among the economic, social and environmental needs of present and future generations, it is necessary to promote harmony with nature. The natural and cultural diversity of the world was acknowledged, and it was recognized that all cultures and civilizations can contribute to sustainable development. The overarching objectives of sustainable development include promoting sustainable patterns of consumption and production, and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development.

The Rio+20 conference called for holistic and integrated approaches to sustainable development that will guide humanity to live in harmony with nature and lead to efforts to restore the health and integrity of the Earth’s ecosystem. Under this theme, papers are welcome in thematic areas of ‘sustainability’ or ‘sustainable development’, such as sustainable agriculture; sustainable consumption and production; sustainable energy; sustainable tourism; and sustainable cities and human settlements.

Theme 2: Well-being and Quality of Life

Organisers: Philomen Harrison and Enrique Ordaz

Since the 2009 Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission's report on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress, numerous initiatives have been presented to further develop conceptual and methodological frameworks for measuring the population's well-being. They all agree that GDP, in particular per-capita GDP, is a metric that does not adequately capture all dimensions of a society's integral development, and therefore does not adequately reflect the state of broader measures of progress and well-being. The sole use of GDP per capita to measure the status a country may thus not lead to the achievement of sustainable economic welfare, social development and human well-being. Among these initiatives, the OECD's "How is life? Measuring Well-being", stands out as an integrated framework addressing the overall concept of well-being for measuring quality of life, material conditions and their sustainability over time, including its distribution across various groups of people.

The objective of the sessions under this theme is to address the multidimensionality of well-being, and identify the main issues related to their measurement. Some of the main challenges may relate to the use of new data sources; and the application of new methodologies. The topics to be considered are: measurement of subjective well-being; happiness and life satisfaction; measurement of quality of work and jobs and quality of life more generally; governance, security and drugs; regional and international differences in well-being; challenges in measuring the sustainability of well-being; etc..

Theme 3: The Future Role of Official Statistics

Organisers: Cynthia Clark, Gary Dunnnett and Jean-Pierre Le Gléau

Official Statistics have a societal role in providing quality information as a public good. Over the past decades, there has been an increase in desire for information and statistics that can be used as evidence for government policy development. These and other factors have increased the demand for information in many policy areas, categories and levels of geography.

Official statistics are being forced to change, in order to meet the needs of a data infused society. Advances in technology have created an environment in which information and data are much more readily available. The worldwide web also provides information on anything at a moments' notice. Gathering information from individuals, enterprises and institutions via surveys has become more difficult to acquire, while administrative data becomes more readily available.

National statistical institutions (NSIs) have the opportunity of developing procedures to use other organisations' data (including administrative data and "big data") to reduce cost of collection and burden on the public. They need to develop procedures to assure the quality of this "data". They also need to address privacy concerns and how best to assure the confidentiality of differently designed official statistics. All of the above may also raise issues regarding the independence, the reliability and the value added of official statistics.

NSIs need to develop a workforce that has a broader range of skills in technology and combining data sources that is currently present. In order for NSIs to be successful in these endeavours, they need to collaborate with other NSIs and other partners more closely, specifically in the area of innovation.

Under this theme, papers are welcomed which address the above challenges for official statistics in the future.

Theme 4: Communication and Statistical Literacy

Organisers: Emanuele Baldacci and Sibylle von Oppeln

In today's societies in which information from many different sources with different degrees of trustworthiness influence the public debate, the demand for proved high-quality non-partisan data is always present. Fact-checking agencies and websites are being established to validate ex-post statements, including through the use of tools automatizing the process. What is the role of official statistics in this new era? As a traditional source of evidence, official statistics are well equipped to contribute to the public debate. However, in order to reach the intended audience, non-traditional paths will need to be explored. How do these new trends shape the way we are communicating with decision-makers and the general public? To provide greater transparency, should we interpret and explain official statistics and the ethical aspects behind it more to the public compared to what we are doing today? Do we need a different approach to statistical literacy? And what kind of partnerships shall we engage with other data providers, relevant state and public organisations or media, especially social media?

The aim of this theme is to discuss the challenges and new roles of official statistics when dealing with information spread through social media and when providing such information. Three parallel sessions will address aspects of 'communication', 'statistical literacy' and 'partnerships', focusing on innovative strategies and solutions that can be shared across official statistics.

Theme 5: Digitalisation and Globalisation

Organisers: Jean-Pierre Cling and Peter van de Ven

When it comes to measuring the economy, including its impact on society at large, two areas are nowadays of particular concern: digitalisation and globalisation. Digitalisation raises questions on the identification of current and potential data sources for measuring official statistics, on how to show the digital economy in statistics (including, for example, through the formulation of satellite accounts), and on the scale of potential mismeasurement in areas most likely to be affected by digitalisation. In addition, issues arise concerning the economic and social impact of digitalisation. The other issue, often intertwined with digitalisation, concerns the effects of an ever globalising world, with growing trade flows and global production arrangements. Here too, one can observe various measurement challenges, for example when it comes to the allocation of economic activities of multinational enterprises to national economies, the monitoring of global behaviour of multinational enterprises, etc. In addition to these measurement issues, as for digitalisation, papers are welcomed which deal with the socio-economic impact of globalisation and on people's well-being more generally.

The aim of this theme on digitalisation and globalisation is to discuss the above issues in three parallel sessions, of which – depending on the submissions – two may be related on measurement challenges of digitalisation and globalisation, respectively. The other one will then focus on the socio-economic impacts of these phenomena.