IFLA Strategy Survey 1: Why a Strategy – Results

Below are the results from the first of four short surveys designed to build a sense of how the current IFLA Strategy works, and what the context and goals might be for the next one. The report runs through the overall methodology, then summarises the results, before summarising questions raised by the data.

1. Methodology and Respondents

The first question asked respondents how far they agreed with the following statements. In each case, the text in brackets is a shorthand which is used in subsequent tables and graphs:

- **a. I am aware of the IFLA Strategy 2019-2024 (Awareness)**
- **b. I regularly refer to the IFLA Strategy 2019-2024 (Regular reference)**
- **c. I have used the IFLA Strategy 2019-2024 to find out about what IFLA does (Find out about IFLA)**
- **d. I have used the IFLA Strategy 2019-2024 to get inspiration for my work as an IFLA volunteer (Inspiration (volunteer))**
- **e. I have used the IFLA Strategy 2019-2024 to get inspiration for the work of my library association (Inspiration (association))**
- **f. I have used the IFLA Strategy 2019-2024 to get inspiration for the work of my library/institution (Inspiration (institution))**
- **g. I have used the IFLA Strategy 2019-2024 to get inspiration for my own professional practice (Inspiration (own practice))**
- **h. I have used the IFLA Strategy 2019-2024 to structure my work as an IFLA volunteer (Structure work (volunteer))**
- **i. I have used the IFLA Strategy 2019-2024 to structure the work of my library association (Structure work (association))**
- **j. I have used the IFLA Strategy 2019-2024 to structure the work of my library/institution (Structure work (institution))**
- **k. I have used the IFLA Strategy 2019-2024 to structure my own professional practice (Structure work (own practice))**
- **l. I have shared the IFLA Strategy 2019-2024 with others (Shared the Strategy)**

Respondents were also encouraged to share examples of strategies that they have found particularly useful, as well as to provide details about the region in which they are based, and how they identified primarily as a volunteer on an IFLA committee, an IFLA member, as someone who follows IFLA, or as having no link at all. In each case, respondents had the choice not to answer if they did not want to.

The survey ran for ten days on Alchemer, and was promoted by e-mails out to IFLA Members, Affiliates and Volunteers, as well as on our website and through social media. In total, there were 330 responses overall.

**Graph 1a: Responses by Region**

- Asia-Oceania
- Europe
- Latin America and the Caribbean
- Middle East and North Africa
- North America
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- I don’t know/don’t want to answer
In terms of regional breakdown (Graph 1a), the largest single share of respondents came from Europe (37%), followed by North America (22.7%) and Asia-Oceania (20%). The other three regions represent 20% in total.

As for responses by type (Graph 1b), just over half were from people who primarily identified as volunteers (52.1%), while 42.1% of responses were from people identifying as Members. 4.5% of responses were from people who described themselves as just following the work of IFLA without having any particular link.

A full overview of the numbers of responses per category is in Table 1 below.

**TABLE 1: Respondents by type and region**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Volunteer</th>
<th>Member</th>
<th>Follower</th>
<th>Don't know/want to answer</th>
<th>No link</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asia-Oceania</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East and North Africa</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't know/don't want to answer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>172</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2. Overall Results**

To get an overview of the responses to the main question, this summary offers two approaches. The first offers an average figure, used by ascribing a score to each of the responses (from 5 for Strongly Agree to 1 for Strongly Disagree). Graph 2a shows the answers per question, indicating that the highest levels of agreement are with being aware of the IFLA Strategy, with the second highest for using the Strategy to find out about IFLA and drawing inspiration for individual’ own practice.
We can also look at the total number of people who agreed or strongly agreed, and who disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statements. This is provided in Graph 2b.

Once again, it is possible to see that the highest levels of agreement are around awareness of the Strategy. Just over half agreed that they had used the Strategy to find out about IFLA ad around half had shared the Strategy with someone else and had used it for their own practice.

The lowest levels of agreement were around using the Strategy to structure the work of associations and institutions, referring to the Strategy regularly, as well as to take inspiration for association work. Similarly, looking at levels of disagreement, these were highest for the statements around making regular reference to the Strategy, structuring association and institution work, and sharing the strategy. The only statements that got more disagreement than agreement were around making regular reference to the Strategy, and structuring association or institution work.
Overall, key questions are:

1. *Is it good or bad news that (only) 15% of respondents claim not to be aware of the Strategy?*
2. *Do we need to think more about the role of the Strategy in explaining IFLA, given how many respondents highlighted the importance of this?*
3. *Should we be happy with fewer than half of respondents sharing the Strategy?*
4. *Should we be concerned that more people disagree than agree that they regularly refer to the Strategy?*

3. Results by Respondent Type

3.1 Volunteers
As already mentioned, just over half of the responses came from people primarily identifying as volunteers – 172 in total. Graph 3.1 provides an overview, again focused on the shares agreeing or disagreeing:

Graph 3.1 Overall Results (Volunteers)

The statements receiving most agreement were around awareness of the Strategy, as well as inspiring and structuring work as volunteers. That these come first is not particularly surprising, although in each case it is still less than 60% of respondents agreeing. Beyond these, almost 50% of volunteers agreed with statements about taking inspiration from the Strategy for their own practice, and sharing it. The highest levels of disagreement were around regular reference, and using it to structure association/institutional work.

In terms of conclusions from this for consideration around the role of the Strategy for volunteers:

5. *Should it be a concern that fewer than 60% of volunteer respondents take inspiration from the current Strategy or use it to structure their work?*
6. Do we need to be thinking more about how the Strategy can help translate people’s work as volunteers within IFLA into their wider association and institutional engagement?

3.2 Members

The figures just for those respondent identifying primarily as IFLA Members is provided in Graph 3.2 (below). Once again, the highest scores are for awareness of the Strategy, with over 50% of respondents also agreeing to statements about using the Strategy to find out about IFLA, as inspiration for work in institutions, and sharing the strategy. The highest levels of disagreement were with statements around using the Strategy for inspiration and structuring work as volunteers, although this is perhaps not surprising given the nature of the respondents.

Key questions rising from here include:

7. Is it good or bad that (only) around 50% of Member respondents cite the Strategy as providing inspiration for the work of associations (in particular) and institutions?
8. Is it desirable that the Strategy should be more used to inspire work than to structure it?

4. Responses by Region

Next, we can break down the results per region. Graphs 4a-4f do this for each region, again including the share of respondents (strongly) agreeing and (strongly) disagreeing.

A first noticeable difference is that respondents in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa are much more likely to agree with the different statements set out. Asia-Oceana respondents are also more positive about the statements, with Europe a little further back. North America
respondents, in all but two cases, were more likely to disagree with the statements than agree with them.

This raises the following questions:

9. What might explain the differences in responses between regions?

10. Are there possible differences in what volunteers and members in different regions might need from a Strategy, and can/should we try to respond?
5. Responses by Statement

Graphs 5a-5l provide the results for each individual statement asked, with a breakdown by region and by respondent type.

The first two focus on awareness and reference to the strategy. We can see that volunteers are more likely to agree that they are aware of the strategy, and that they refer to the Strategy regularly than Members, although scores for regular referencing are far lower than for awareness. Across different regions, Asia-Oceania, LAC and Sub-Saharan African respondents were most likely to cite awareness of the Strategy, and North American respondents least.

Respondents from MENA were by a long way the most likely to agree that they make regular reference to the Strategy, followed by Sub-Saharan Africa, LAC, Asia-Oceania and European members. Less than 14% of North American members agreed that they referred to the strategy regularly.

Next, Graph 5c presents how far respondents agree with the statement that they have used the IFLA Strategy to find out about IFLA. This reflects the potential role of a Strategy as a calling card or explainer for those who are, or who are thinking about becoming, involved in the Federation.

A potential question is therefore:

11. Is it a problem that respondents are referring relatively rarely to the Strategy?
The next graphs (5c-d) looks at responses to the statement about using the Strategy to find out about IFLA, and sharing it with others.

Results on using the Strategy to find out about IFLA were relatively stable across different types of respondent. Meanwhile, across regions, MENA and Sub-Saharan African respondents were most likely use the Strategy to find out about IFLA, while North American ones were least likely to agree (although more people agreed than disagreed).

As for sharing the Strategy with others, around 50% reported having done so, with slightly more Members than volunteers doing this. The share of respondents agreeing that they had shared the Strategy was relatively even across regions (just over 50%), with MENA respondents standing out for being more likely to share, and North American ones for being less likely to share. It was only in North America that more people disagreed than agreed. A key question could therefore be:

12. Do we want respondents to be sharing the Strategy more, and if so, how can we do this?
The next set of graphs (5e-5h) look at responses to how far respondents take inspiration from the society, in their volunteer work, within their association and institutions, and in their professional practice.

It has already been noted above already that there tended to be higher scores for inspiration for volunteers and own practice than for inspiration for association and institution work, despite these forming the core of IFLA’s membership.

Looking in more detail, as already noted volunteers are more likely to agree that they take inspiration for strategy for their volunteer work than members. Meanwhile, respondents identifying as members are slightly more likely to say that they have been inspired by the Strategy in their association and institutional work. The results are similar between volunteers and members in taking inspiration for their own practice.

Across regions, the pattern of MENA respondents being most likely to agree with statements, followed by LAC and Sub-Saharan Africa, then Asia-Oceania, then Europe, and North America is repeated across the statements on taking inspiration for volunteer, association and personal work. Interestingly, the opposite is true for taking inspiration for work in institutions – North American respondents were most likely to agree that they do use the Strategy (albeit barely 20%), followed by Europe and Asia-Oceania.
It has already been highlighted that a question for the Governing Board could be whether it is a concern that lower levels of agreement with statements about taking inspiration from the Strategy in associations or institutions is a matter of concern. This is particularly so given the original ambition that it should serve to provide a framework for members’ own strategy-building. An additional question could be:

13. *Is it normal or desirable that the Strategy has a stronger role in providing inspiration in some regions rather than others?*

The next graphs (5i-5l) look at responses around whether the Strategy has served to structure work as volunteers, associations, institutions and individuals.

Again as above, it is perhaps to be expected that those identifying as IFLA volunteers are more likely to draw on the IFLA Strategy to structure their volunteer work than Members. Looking at results for the statement about using the Strategy to structure association and institution work, Members were more likely to agree than volunteers, although the figures were 34% and 42% respectively agreeing.

As for regional differences, the same pattern as for previous questions – MENA with the highest level of agreement, followed by LAC and Sub-Saharan Africa, then Asia-Oceania, and North America last. It is worth noting again that North America stands out for having higher numbers of respondents disagreeing with statements than agreeing with them.
Possible questions for consideration include:

14. **Should the share of people agreeing that the Strategy has structured their volunteer work be higher, and if so, why isn’t it at the moment?**
15. **Should the more positive results around using the Strategy for inspiration and structuring from MENA, LAC and Sub-Saharan Africa be something to celebrate as evidence of impact, and how can we pursue this?**

### 6. Summary of questions

Below is a summary of the questions that the data provided could raise for discussion.

1. Is it good or bad news that (only) 15% of respondents claim not to be aware of the Strategy?
2. Do we need to think more about the role of the Strategy in explaining IFLA, given how many respondents highlighted the importance of this?
3. Should we be happy with fewer than half of respondents sharing the Strategy?
4. Should we be concerned that more people disagree than agree that they regularly refer to the Strategy?
5. Should it be a concern that fewer than 60% of volunteer respondents take inspiration from the current Strategy or use it to structure their work?
6. Do we need to be thinking more about how the Strategy can help translate people’s work as volunteers within IFLA into their wider association and institutional engagement?
7. Is it good or bad that (only) around 50% of Member respondents cite the Strategy as providing inspiration for the work of associations (in particular) and institutions?
8. Is it desirable that the Strategy should be more used to inspire work than to structure it?
9. What might explain the differences in responses between regions?
10. Are there possible differences in what volunteers and members in different regions might need from a Strategy, and can/should we try to respond?
11. Is it a problem that volunteers in particular are referring relatively rarely to the Strategy?
12. Do we want respondents to be sharing the Strategy more, and if so, how can we do this?
13. Is it normal or desirable that the Strategy has a stronger role in providing inspiration in some regions rather than others?
14. Should the share of people agreeing that the Strategy has structured their volunteer work be higher, and if so, why isn’t it at the moment?
15. Should the more positive results around using the Strategy for inspiration and structuring from MENA, LAC and Sub-Saharan Africa be something to celebrate as evidence of impact, and how can we pursue this?