



IFLA Strategy Survey Results 6

Draft IFLA Strategy

The final IFLA Strategy survey focused on the draft Strategy itself, as agreed by the Governing Board as a draft in its April meetings. The survey ran from 29 April until 19 June, with various e-mail reminders and a series of five townhall meetings in June in order to support responses.

This report summarises what we heard through the survey. We hope that it sheds light on what different parts of our field expect from IFLA, as well as how well they think the draft Strategy does this. Crucially, it will help the Governing Board work towards a final draft to approve on 29 July.

The report starts with an overview of the survey and respondents, before looking at the breakdowns by type of respondents, region and length of experience. It then summarises response to the open question about potential improvements.

0. The Survey

As highlighted, the survey ran from 29 April to 19 June 2024, working through Alchemer. The survey was anonymous and no IP addresses were collected. Respondents were asked to say who they represented (association, volunteer or others), which region they were based in, and how many years of library experience they had (0-10, 10-20, 20+ years). These were intended to help identify specific needs or trends.

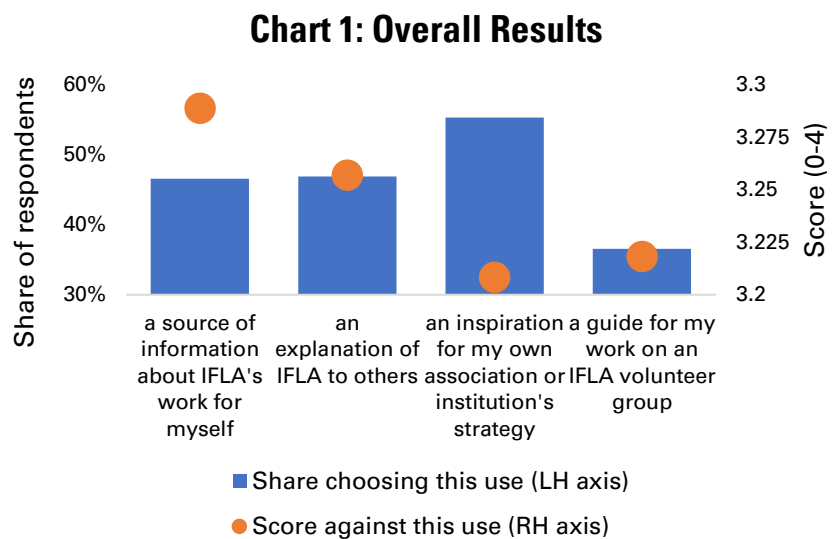
Then, respondents were asked to indicate in which of the following ways they might use the Strategy: a source of information about IFLA's work for myself; an explanation of IFLA to others; an inspiration for my own association or institution's strategy; a guide for my work on an IFLA volunteer group.

They then gave a judgement on how far the current draft would meet these goals. On this, responses were given from 'very well' to 'well' 'not very well' and 'not at all'. These were scored respectively from 4 to 1, with 'I don't know' scored at zero and not counted further. This makes it possible to carry out analysis.

Finally, there was an opportunity to leave further comments. In all, 320 full responses were received, and 101 people took the opportunity to leave a comment.

1. Overall Results

Looking at the overall numbers from across the 320 respondents, we can look both at the share selecting different uses and how well they felt that the draft strategy delivered on this already in Chart 1.



The first point to underline is that while there is variation in the shares planning to use the Strategy in different ways, there is less so in the scores provided.

The value of the Strategy to inspire association or institution strategies was selected by over 55% of respondents, with all others chosen by fewer than half of respondents. A similar number (just over 46%) said that they would use the strategy as a source of information for themselves and for others, while the least popular use was to guide work on volunteer groups. This data is affected by respondent types however (see below).

The scores given to the draft strategy are much closer – just under 3.3 (so between 'well' and 'very well') for it as a source of information, and just over 3.2 (also between 'well' and 'very well') for its value as an inspiration to the work of associations and institutions.

Takeaways

- *There continue to be major shares of respondents planning to use the Strategy in different ways, something that the final version of the Strategy will need to recognise.*
- *There are overall good scores, but scope to improve in order to get closer to 4.*

2. Responses by respondent type

The first breakdown of data is by whether respondents were volunteers, members, partners, participants in events or something else.

Chart 2a shows the shares of respondents from each category. Members dominate here, representing over 23 of total answers (218/320). The second biggest category is volunteers, who count for a quarter of responses, with smaller numbers then for

others, event participants and partners. Subsequent charts only provide data for members and volunteers, given the small numbers of other respondents.

Chart 2b then looks at how different respondent types planned to use the IFLA Strategy. Perhaps unsurprisingly, IFLA volunteers were most likely to use it as a guide for their own work, with its potential as an explanation of IFLA to others chosen by over half of respondents.

Chart 2a: Shares of responses by respondent type

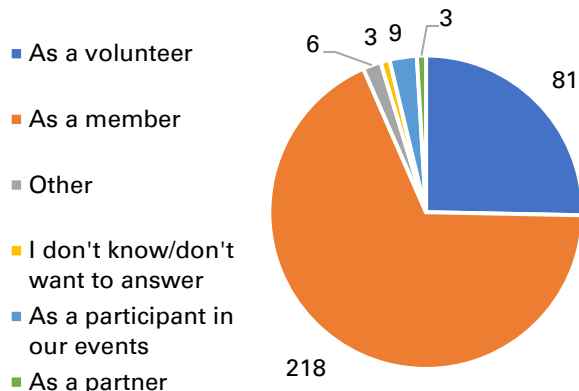
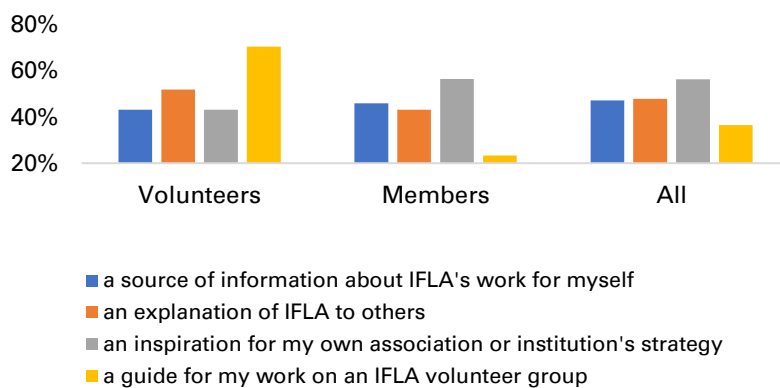


Chart 2b: Planned uses of the Strategy (by respondent type)

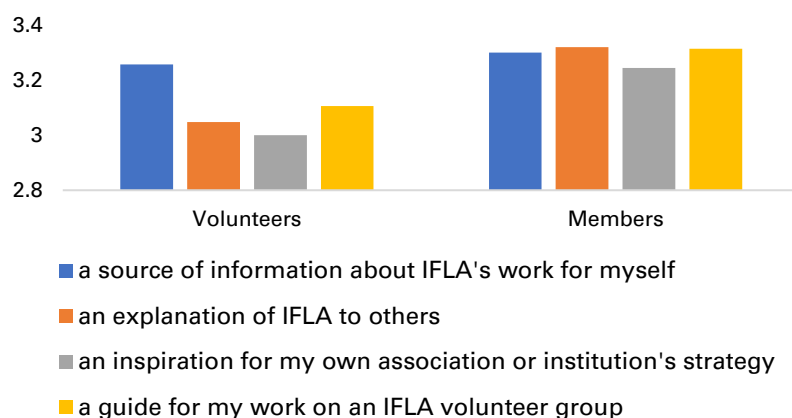


To note, it is therefore the low share of volunteers in overall votes that therefore likely explains why use to guide work within IFLA was not seen as so important in the previous section. Volunteers were also more likely to use the Strategy to explain IFLA to others than IFLA Members.

Among members, it was the potential of the Strategy to inspire their own association or institutional strategy that was most often chosen (which also makes sense).

As for the scores provided to the current draft on how well it achieved these different goals, this time with all results for each respondent type grouped, we can look at Chart 2c.

Chart 2c: How well does the Strategy do (by respondent type)



Volunteers most appreciated the draft for its ability to explain IFLA to themselves, but were less convinced (with

scores around 3) for the other uses. Members were more positive in general, with scores on each of the four uses very close together.

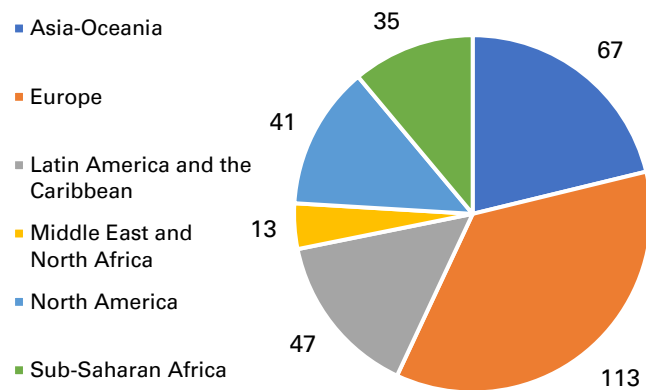
Takeaways

- *Members and volunteers expect different things from the Strategy, and we will need to look to cater for both.*
- *There is a case for providing explainers about the Strategy for different groups of respondents afterwards.*

3. Responses by region

The regional breakdown of responses can be seen in chart 3a. The largest share of responses (113/320) come from Europe, with Asia Oceania (67) second, and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) third (47), a little ahead of North America (41 responses) and Sub-Saharan Africa (35 responses). We received 13 responses from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

Chart 2a: Shares of responses by respondent region



This is a higher than usual share of responses from the LAC region, potentially due to focused Spanish-language outreach.

Chart 3b: Planned uses of the Strategy (by respondent region)

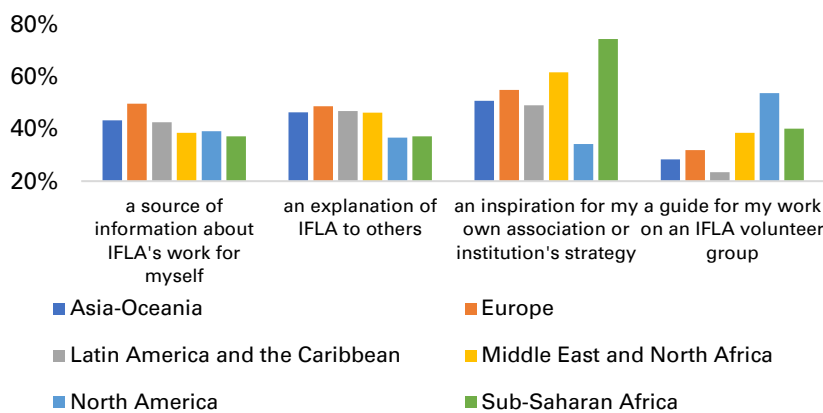


Chart 3b shows the share of respondents from each region choosing each potential use of the Strategy. In all regions except North America, the role of the Strategy in inspiring the Strategies of other associations and institutions came out top, while in four regions, its role in guiding volunteer work

was least chosen. It is worth noting the particular value of the Strategy in supporting association and institution strategy development in MENA and Sub-Saharan Africa.

North America went against the trend, with the value of the Strategy as a guide most frequently chosen, and its value in inspiring other associations' work least. There were relatively consistent scores for using the Strategy to inform oneself, but slightly higher ones in Asia-Oceania, Europe, LAC and MENA for using it to inform others, and lower in the other regions.

Chart 3c: How well does the Strategy do (by respondent region)

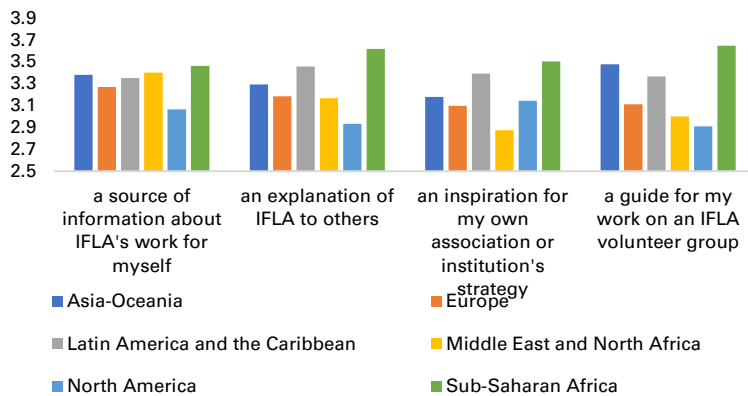


Chart 3c then shares the scores given. Across all of the potential uses, Sub-Saharan Africa respondents were most positive, and North Americans least, with the exception of the value of the Strategy in inspiring their own association or institution strategies. Europeans were generally in the bottom half when it came to how well they felt the draft could deliver on the different potential uses.

Scores between regions were nonetheless relatively close together on the value of the Strategy as a source of information. They were more varied when it came to the worth of the Strategy in explaining IFLA to others. Going from 2.9 to 3.6, and LAC being second most positive after Sub-Saharan Africa. The role of the Strategy in inspiring others also varied (from 2.875 to 3.5), with the lowest score this time for the MENA region. Among volunteers, average scores went from 2.9 (North America) to over 3.6 (Sub-Saharan Africa).

Takeaways

- *We continue to see regional divergence in how the Strategy is likely to be used, which we will need to take into consideration. Similarly, we should reflect on elements that may make people in different regions appreciate different things in a Strategy.*

4. Responses by length of experience

The final disaggregation was by length of experience. This is a new element of Strategy surveys, but consistent with IFLA's effort to build its focus on sustainability, and so the leaders of the future.

Chart 4a: Shares of responses by length of experience

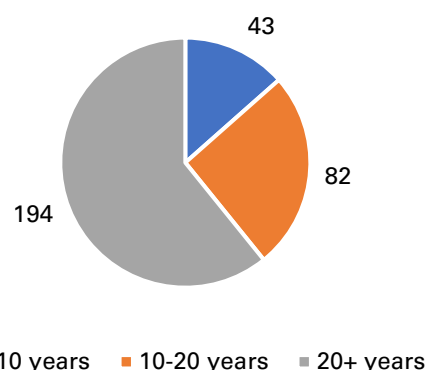


Chart 4a shows the results, making clear that around 2/3 of respondents had been active in libraries for 20 years or more. Around a quarter had been active for 10-20 years, and around an eighth for 0-10 years. This response rate among emerging leaders is something that we may wish to address in future.

Chart 4b: Planned uses of the Strategy (by length of experience)

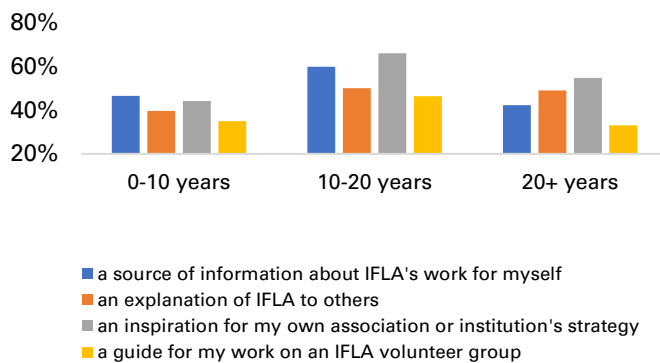
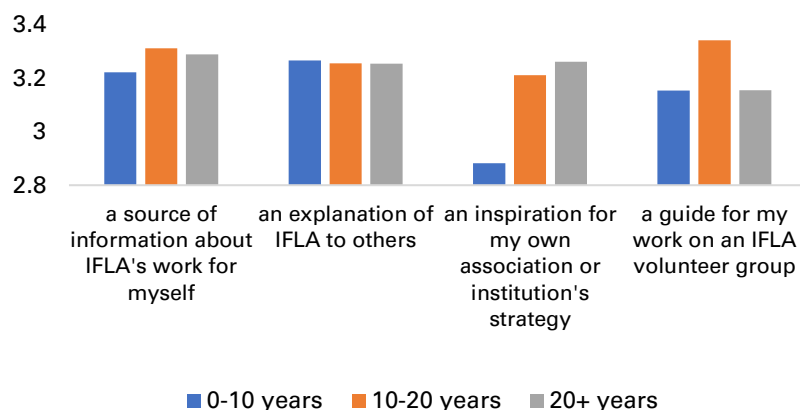


Chart 4b provides figures for the shares of respondents in each group saying that they would use the Strategy in different ways. There is no strong pattern here, with those in the 10-20 year category most likely to choose each answer than their less or more experienced colleagues. What is perhaps noticeable is that emerging leaders are least likely to choose explaining IFLA to others or inspiring

association/institution work. This may be because of their position within their own environments.

Chart 4c then gives data on how well the draft would fulfil respondents' needs of it. Here, we can see that the scores are relatively close when it comes to how well the draft Strategy provides information about IFLA and explains it to others (although emerging leaders were marginally less convinced about the first). However, emerging leaders gave much lower

Chart 4c: How well does the Strategy do (by length of experience)



scores in general for the draft's ability to inspire association and institution strategies compared to peers with more experience. Finally, those with 10-20 years of experience were more likely than those with less or more experience to think that the Strategy would be useful in guiding work on IFLA volunteer groups.

Takeaways

- We should look more at how to ensure more responses from emerging leaders
- We should look at how to make the Strategy more engaging as a way for emerging leaders to be informed about IFLA, as well as to be applicable to the development of other strategies.

5. Additional comments received via the survey

101 out of the 320 respondents offered additional comments in addition to their answers to the other questions. Of these, almost 30% simply underlined that they supported the draft strategy and looked forward to its implementation. Other views were as below, with coded references to the submissions received. In these:

First letter	Second letter	Number
I = I don't know/don't want to answer	A = Asia-Oceania	0 = 0-10 years' experience
M = Member	E = Europe	10 = 10-20 years' experience
O = Other	I = I don't know/don't want to answer	20 = 20+ years' experience
P = Partner	L = Latin America and the Caribbean	
V = Volunteer	M = Middle East and North Africa	
	N = North America	
	S = Sub-Saharan Africa	

Therefore, for example, ME10 means a respondent who is a Member, based in Europe, with 10-20 years experience.

The Strategy is not clear/is confusing (substance): respondents suggested there was too much text (ME10), that language could be tighter/clearer (VN20, VE10, MN20). Words like 'enabler' could be better, as could 'future proofing' which implied a negative future (VN10). More structurally, there should be stronger connections between goals, concepts and actions (MN10), and we should be specific about what we are doing for who (VE10, VE20) and be more concrete in general (ML20). It should not just look like a list of activities (VE10). We could swap areas 2 and 3, and make sure each impact area begins with a verb (VE20).

Response: this feedback is helpful, and indeed it is clear that we can make the next draft of the Strategy clearer, and make the story stronger

The Strategy is not clear/is confusing (design): some respondents also highlighted the way in which the information is presented, with too much text (ME10), and a difficult format (VE20). It needs stronger graphic design (OE20).

Response: we are already planning to focus strongly on design questions once the final edition is ready.

The Strategy could be clearer about its goals: one respondent suggested being clearer about the Sustainable Development Goals, and not just development (VN20). Another didn't want to talk about sustainable development so much (VE10)

Response: given the mixed response, we will continue to go for balance here. We will discuss direct references to the SDGs, given that they run until 2030.

The Strategy should be more persuasive: one respondent talked about whether the Strategy would help convince local councils to engage with IFLA, and worried that currently it didn't (IN20). We should be clearer about the change we want to see (VN20). There was concern that people (including librarians) simply didn't see libraries as development actors (VN20), and we should do more to show libraries return on investment (MA20).

Response: This is very valuable feedback, and underlines useful points both for the Strategy and wider advocacy work.

The Strategy should be more inclusive: a few respondents highlighted the need to talk more about inclusiveness, in particular between regions (VM10), and to be relevant to parts of the world where IFLA is currently absent (ML20), for example through regional meetings (VE20) and more support for regional units (ML20) and libraries in the Global South (VL10, OA0). We should highlight the importance of diversity, equity and transparency in general (ME20, ME20). Language was also important (VE10).

Response: we will look at how we can underline that our work needs to include libraries globally, and that inclusion is a key principle underlying our work.

The Strategy should say more about IFLA's own communities: one respondent argued that the Strategy should say more about the work of IFLA's volunteers (VN20) (and less about policy-makers (VE10), and how to support them practically (MN20). Meanwhile another commented on the role of sections in the Information Futures Summit (MV20). Others wanted more support for associations (MS20), and in particular about how we work with them to make change happen (MA20, VS0). We should say more about how we build networks among members (VS10, MS10).

Response: we will look at how to strengthen this in the Strategy, but will also offer specific guides for volunteers looking at what they can do with the report.

The Strategy needs to be more relevant to communities: a few respondents wanted to strengthen the Strategy's relevance to communities (ME10), especially those in difficulty (ME10). One person suggested an impact area for community impact (VN20). It would be important to think more about how the ideas in the Strategy are transposed to the national and regional levels (ME20).

Response: we will take this point into account and strengthen the Strategy accordingly.

The Strategy should talk more about principles and values: respondents argued that we should say more about working to establish principles around access to information for all (VM10), free expression (VE20), as well as ethics (VE10). Another argued that we should make the vision about sustainable futures through knowledge and collaboration (ME20), and another to highlight more about sustainability (MA20)

Response: *the draft already highlights the importance of intellectual freedom, but we can explore how to bring this out more clearly. All comments will be considered further.*

The Strategy should talk about ongoing learning: one respondent suggested a stronger focus on lifelong learning across the field (OA0), and in specific regions (VM20). There should also be more about working with library schools and educators (ME0), and work to ensure we have great people coming into the profession (MA10), as well as to promote emerging leaders (VL20).

Response: *a focus on learning is already present in reference to our communities, but we can both build this out more, and look at how the Strategy can be applied in class.*

The Strategy should be clearer about measurement: some respondents wanted more detail here, including clear KPIs (VN0, ML0), while another called for a reassessment of how we define what success looks like for units (VN20). We should also be very careful about setting targets that we cannot deliver on our own (or those which in fact others deliver on) (ME20).

Response: *as underlined in our townhall sessions, KPIs will only be defined definitively once we have the Strategy approved.*

The Strategy should be clearer about who does the work later: one respondent was concerned about who would prepare the 1-year plans proposed on the first page (OE20).

Response: *this concern is taken into account. Units still need to produce two-year plans and an update, and we are concerned that this doesn't end up taking far too long.*

The Strategy should be more aware of the outside world: one respondent argued we should think more about potential comparator organisations, and in particular those supporting the same communities as libraries serve (VA20), and our role in other domains (VE20). We should talk more about our partners also (PL20, ON10).

Response: *this point is welcome and we will be happy to strengthen these.*

Specific issues to highlight: respondents suggested we should talk more about libraries under threat (VI0), advocacy (VL20, VE20, VN20), democracy and digital change (ME0), AI (VL20), support for association development (VS0), IFLA's own dependence on uncertain funding streams (VE10), the value of standards (ME20).

Response: *it was a deliberate choice to keep the draft high level and not mention specific topics but we will need to again at the Strategy in any case.*

6. Conclusions

The survey provides a lot of helpful feedback for the development of a new version for final approval by the Governing Board at the end of July. This – combined with the ideas and views shared during the five townhall sessions – will help make the document more effective at delivering on the different roles that it will have in our community.