

METHODS NOTE · IRISP/2026/005

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The IRISP Measurement Framework

Abstract

This methods note documents the measurement framework that governs every IRISP® study. It specifies how a shared perception is defined operationally, how survey instruments are constructed and piloted, how samples are drawn and documented, and how uncertainty is quantified and displayed in publications.

The framework's central commitment is comparability: instruments are designed so that the same question, asked of different groups, in different countries, or at different times, yields answers that can be placed side by side. The note describes the translation and adaptation protocol that protects this comparability across languages.

Every future IRISP® publication will cite this framework and state any deviation from it explicitly. The framework is versioned; revisions will be published as successive editions of this note.

1 · Operational definition

A shared perception is measured as the distribution of answers a defined population gives to a question about a state of the world. Three elements must be fixed before fieldwork: the population and its sampling frame; the question, worded so that it asks for a description rather than a preference; and, where the perception concerns a measurable quantity, the reference indicator against which answers will be compared.

The unit of publication is the distribution, never only its average. Averages hide the structure of a perception — who holds it, how strongly, and how it varies across groups — and that structure is usually the finding.

2 · The measurement cycle

01 Question

One question, defined in measurable terms.

02 Measurement and analysis

Documented instruments; uncertainty quantified, never hidden.

03 Open publication

Report, dataset and methods note — published together.

3 · Comparability and translation

Instruments are designed once and adapted, not rewritten, for each language and country. Adaptation follows a documented protocol: translation, independent back-translation, reconciliation,

and a recorded decision for every wording that could shift the meaning of the question. The protocol file is part of the study's methods note.

A comparison is published only when the underlying instruments are comparable. Where adaptation forced a meaningful difference, the difference is stated next to the comparison — or the comparison is not made.

4 · Uncertainty and reporting

Every published estimate carries its uncertainty: sampling margins for survey estimates, and stated limitations for everything else. Uncertainty is displayed where the estimate is displayed — not in an appendix — and no finding is described in the text with more precision than its interval supports.

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