ESOMAR 28 Q&As

COMPANY PROFILE

1. What experience does your company have in providing online samples for market research?

This answer might help you to form an opinion about the relevant experience of the sample provider. How long has the sample provider been providing this service and do they have for example a market research, direct marketing or more technological background? Are the samples solely provided for third party research, or does the company also conduct proprietary work using their panels?

- The story began in Prague, Czech Republic in 2017, when Thai and Czech market research companies met each other during a European project. Not so long after (in 2019), after more successful projects and getting to know one another, a Thai-Czech joint venture company 'iNMS' has been founded.
- By combining European experience with more than 15 years of operating the leading Online Panels in Central Europe, and more than 10 years of Market Expertise in Asia, iNMS began conducting their first Online Panel under the name of "iSampling".
- iSampling provides not only high quality of the online sample obtained from a 100% phone call verification, it can also achieve 'Hard to Reach samples through efficient recruitment and pre-targeting.
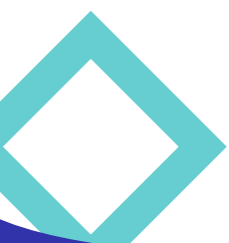
SAMPLE SOURCES AND RECRUITMENT

2. Please describe and explain the type(s) of online sample sources from which you get respondents. Are these databases? Actively managed research panels? Direct marketing lists? Social networks? Web intercept (also known as river) samples?

The description of the types of sources a provider uses for delivering an online sample will provide insight into the quality of the sample.

●	iSampling solely makes use of its own actively managed research panel named Oyster Club. The Oyster Club panel recruit its panelists through online campaigns, such as online advertisement through various channels (Facebook, Instagram, Google Ads etc.) as well as offline strategies (street intercept and telephone recruitment). We also encourage respondents themselves to invite their friends and relatives to Oyster Club. We do not employ river sampling

3. If you provide samples from more than one source: How are the different sample sources blended together to ensure validity? How can this be replicated over time to provide reliability? How do you deal with the possibility of duplication of respondents across sources?

The variation in data coming from different sources has been well documented. Overlap between different panel providers can be significant in some cases and de-duplication removes this source of error, and frustration for respondents.

●	For the vast majority of projects, iSampling utilizes only its own managed online panel. However, when necessary and upon the agreement of the client, iNMS can utilize sample from managed panels of our trusted partners to support the project's needs to ensure samples provided can represent the actual population at its best. In that case we blend more sample sources without duplicities comparing digital fingerprints of the respondents.
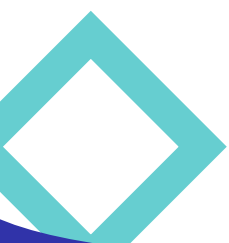
4. Are your sample source(s) used solely for market research? If not, what other purposes are they used for?

Combining respondents from sources set up primarily for different purposes (like direct marketing for example) may cause undesirable survey effects.

- iSampling online panel is used solely for market research purposes.

5. How do you source groups that may be hard to reach on the internet?

Ensuring the inclusion of hard-to-reach groups on the internet (like ethnic minority groups, young people, seniors, etc.) may increase population coverage and improve the quality of the sample provided.
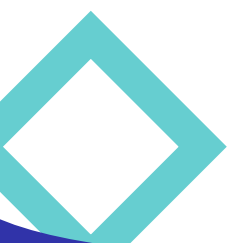
- iSampling manages its panel with the aim to be as close as possible to the representative sample of the population – and to be able to provide appropriate samples you need. To source hard to reach target groups, we apply a variety of recruitment methodologies, through both online channels and traditional offline channels.
    - **Online recruitment** includes customized online advertising, affiliate networks and specialized websites.
    - **Offline,** we apply our thorough understanding of delicate Asian culture to effectively approach hard to reach targets using various methods such as street intercepts or offline advertisement.

6. If, on a particular project, you need to supplement your sample(s) with sample(s) from other providers, how do you select those partners? Is it your policy to notify a client in advance when using a third party provider?

Many providers work with third parties. This means that the quality of the sample is also dependent on the quality of sample providers that the buyer did not select. Transparency is essential in this situation. Overlap between different providers can be significant in some cases and de-duplication removes this source of error, and frustration for respondents. Providers who observe process standards like the ISO standards are required to give you this information.

- In an early stage of requesting quotation and project feasibility discussion with the client, iSampling ensure that the client will be fully informed if samples from third party online panel will be required. Since data quality is our most important policy, we only supplement the sample from well-established reliable partners which source their sample from a double-opt-in managed research panel.

SAMPLING AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

7. What steps do you take to achieve a representative sample of the target population?

The sampling processes (i.e. how individuals are selected or allocated from the sample sources) used are the main factor in sample provision. A systematic approach based on market research fundamentals may increase sample quality.

- iSampling manages its panel with the aim to be as close as possible to the representative sample of the population to truthfully reflect consumer attitudes and behavior.
- Our proprietary panel management software enables us to select and provide the client with a representative sample based on key demographics or to select the sample utilizing other quotas.
- The sample within the quotas is selected randomly among available panelists, considering their utilization limits (i.e. filling 2 questionnaires a week / 36 questionnaires a year at maximum).

8. Do you employ a survey router?

A survey router is a software system that allocates willing respondents to surveys for which they are likely to qualify. Respondents will have been directed to the router for different reasons, perhaps after not qualifying for another survey in which they had been directly invited to participate, or maybe as a result of a general invitation from the router itself. There is no consensus at present about whether and how the use of a router affects the responses that individuals give to survey questions.

- iSampling does not employ a survey router
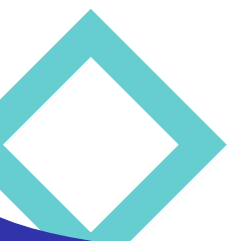
9. If you use a router: Please describe the allocation process within your router. How do you decide which surveys might be considered for a respondent? On what priority basis are respondents allocated to surveys?

Biases of varying severity may arise from the prioritization in choices of surveys to present to respondents and the method of allocation.

● iSampling does not employ a survey router

10. If you use a router: What measures do you take to guard against, or mitigate, any bias arising from employing a router? How do you measure and report any bias?

If Person A is allocated to Survey X on the basis of some characteristic then they may not be allowed to also do Survey Y. The sample for Survey Y is potentially biased by the absence of people like Person A.

● iSampling does not employ a survey router

11. If you use a router: Who in your company sets the parameters of the router? Is it a dedicated team or individual project managers?

It may be necessary to try to replicate your project in the future with as many of the parameters as possible set to the same values. How difficult or easy will this be?

● iSampling does not employ a survey router
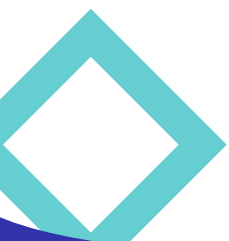
12. What profiling data is held on respondents? How is it done? How does this differ across sample sources? How is it kept up-to-date? If no relevant profiling data is held, how are low incidence projects dealt with?

The usefulness to your project of pre-profiled information will depend on the precise question asked and may also depend on when it was asked. If real time profiling is used, what control do you have over what question is actually asked?

- The profiling information consists of gender, age, region (based on the zip code), education, occupation, income, marital status and age and gender of children.
- iSampling is currently in the process of getting additional profiling data in several categories from the panel members.
- We require panelists to update their profile every six months, those without updated information are not able to take surveys.

13. Please describe your survey invitation process. What is the proposition that people are offered to take part in individual surveys? What information about the project itself is given in the process? Apart from direct invitations to specific surveys (or to a router), what other means of invitation to surveys are respondents exposed to? You should note that not all invitations to participate take the form of emails.

The type of proposition (and associated rewards) could influence the type of people who agree to take part in specific projects and can therefore influence sample quality. The level of detail given about the project may also influence response.

- The selected panelists receive an email invitation at their validated email address, which contains information on the length of the questionnaire and its topic (e.g. Gas Station usage). There is a link in the invitation email taking the respondent to the survey portal at the panel webpage, where they can also see the reward in points offered for the particular survey.

14. Please describe the incentives that respondents are offered for taking part in your surveys. How does this differ by sample source, by interview length, by respondent characteristics?

The reward or incentive system may impact on the reasons why people participate in a specific project and these effects can cause bias to the sample.

- iSampling uses a **point system** to reward the panelists for taking surveys, updating their profile information and for inviting new members.
- The reward for taking a particular survey is based on **its length and complexity**, alternatively on the target group or topic of the survey in special cases.
- The points can be exchanged for various rewards such as vouchers and other **tangible goods**, as well as **donated to charitable organizations.**

15. What information about a project do you need in order to give an accurate estimate of feasibility using your own resources?

The "size" of any panel or source may not necessarily be an accurate indicator that your specific project can be completed or completed within your desired time frame.

We provide feasibility estimates for a client's project based on the following information:

- **Overall project information:** Project background and objectives
- **Sampling demographic profile***:* Gender, Age group, Occupation, Education, etc.
- **Other qualification or criteria involving the project's objectives**, i.e., lifestyle, characteristics
- **Expected Incidence Rate:** Can be estimated from sample target group if a client has no prior knowledge or information.
- **Quotas:** Definition, size
- **Questionnaire characteristics:** Length of the interview, length of the screening questions
- **Fieldwork time**

16. Do you measure respondent satisfaction? Is this information made available to clients?

Respondent satisfaction may be an indicator of willingness to take future surveys. Respondent reactions to your survey from self-reported feedback or from an analysis of suspend points might be very valuable to help understand survey results.

We monitor panelists satisfaction via multiple approaches

- **Quarterly Survey Satisfaction:** We conduct a standard satisfaction survey among our members quarterly. The standard satisfaction surveys consist of questions about satisfaction towards panel activities, such as newsletters, websites, surveys invitation, rewards, etc. Panelists feedback is analyzed and used for constant improvement of the panel.
- **Survey Satisfaction:** After completing a survey, panelists may be invited to complete a questionnaire about satisfaction towards the survey that was just completed. The results can be made available to clients if they ask for the service in advance.

17. What information do you provide to debrief your client after the project has finished?

One should expect a full sample provider debrief report, including gross sample, start rate, participation rate, drop-out rate, the invitation/contact text, a description of the field work process, and so on. Sample providers should be able to list the standard reports and metrics that they make available.

- iSampling provides a full fieldwork report including
  - Average survey length
  - Incidence Rate
  - Fieldwork time
  - Response rate, Completion rate
  - Other reports upon request
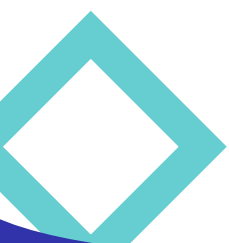
DATA QUALITY AND VALIDATION

18. Who is responsible for data quality checks? If it is you, do you have in place procedures to reduce or eliminate undesired within survey behaviors, such as (a) random responding, (b) Illogical or inconsistent responding, (c) overuse of item nonresponse (e.g. "Don't Know") or (d) speeding (too rapid survey completion)? Please describe these procedures.

The use of such procedures may increase the reliability and validity of the survey data.

Upon Registration each panel member is verified by a phone call. Members who cannot be reached or fail to answer basic information about themselves are eliminated from the panel. We also detect duplicate registrations employing Digital Fingerprint and given contact information.

- In case surveys are **hosted by iSampling (iNMS)**, we employ number of internal tools to provide the data of the highest quality. Before entering data processing & analyzing stage, our in-house Data team with more than 10 years of Data Science expertise use these tools and screen out unqualified questionnaires based on median of filling time, consistency of answers, suspiciously similar answers in all batteries, quality of OEQ answers etc. Additionally, we can put "control questions" into the questionnaire directly which are aimed to check the respondents' attention. If they answer incorrectly, the questionnaire is finished with status "quality control out".

In case survey is **hosted at the client's side**, we penalize and eventually eliminate respondents reported as cheating ("quality control out" status) by the client. We also check digital fingerprints for duplicate respondents.

19. How often can the same individual be contacted to take part in a survey within a specified period whether they respond to the contact or not? How does this vary across your sample sources?

Over solicitation may have an impact on respondent engagement or on self-selection and non-response bias.

- The invitations are distributed evenly among pre-targeted panelists in order not to contact them more often than necessary. No invitations are sent after the limit of 2 completed surveys a week is met by the particular respondent. Usually, no more than 2 reminders to take a survey are sent.

20. How often can the same individual take part in a survey within a specified period? How does this vary across your sample sources? How do you manage this within categories and/or time periods?

Frequency of survey participation may increase the risk of undesirable conditioning effects or other potential biases.

- We allow a panelist to complete 2 surveys a week. Due higher demand of particular target groups, some respondents may be required to take part in more surveys than others. However, participation is controlled with emphasis to exclude panelists who have already reached their maximum participation limit or have participated in a similar study within a month.
- A panelist will complete no more than 36 surveys a year.

21. Do you maintain individual level data such as recent participation history, date of entry, source, etc., on your survey respondents? Are you able to supply your client with a project analysis of such individual level data?

This type of data per respondent including how the total population is defined and how the sample was selected and drawn, may increase the possibilities for analysis of data quality.

- iSampling system automatically logs panelist activities since the registration, including, but not limited to, participation history, date of entry, source etc. Relevant data may be provided to the client upon request.

22. Do you have a confirmation of respondent identity procedure? Do you have procedures to detect fraudulent respondents? Please describe these procedures as they are implemented at sample source registration and/or at the point of entry to a survey or router. If you offer B2B samples what are the procedures there, if any?

Confirmation of identity can increase quality by decreasing multiple entries, fraudulent panelists etc.

iSampling validates the identity of each panelist and prevents registering multiple times with the same email address, social media account or telephone number.

- **Email Validation:** Each member's email address is verified during the double opt-in registration process.
- **Telephone Validation:** The telephone verification is done shortly after the panelist successfully registers into our system. This is to double-check whether the information provided by the panelist matches the real identity of the panelist. Should one of these validation steps failed, the panelists will be excluded from the system.
- **Home address verification:** The physical address is verified upon reward delivery.
- **Digital Fingerprint:** This IT procedure helps eliminate respondents who try to set up multiple accounts.
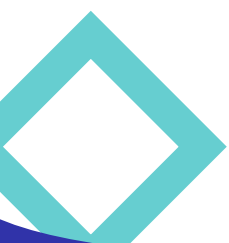
POLICIES AND COMPLIANCE

23. Please describe the 'opt-in for market research' processes for all your online sample sources.

The opt-in process indicates the respondents' relationship with the sample source provider. The market generally makes a distinction between single and double opt-in. Double opt-in refers to the process by which a check is made to confirm that the person joining a panel or database wishes to be a member and understands what to expect (in advance of participating in an actual survey for a paying client).

- iSampling uses "Double opt-in" for all panelists. When individuals are invited to join the panel from various sources or they decide to register on their own, they are required to give valid email address, as well as accept the terms and conditions of membership. The system then sends an email appeal to confirm their email address and verify the intention to register by clicking the designated button in the message.
- Panelists can have their account deleted if they decide so by notifying the panel support.

24. Please provide a link to your Privacy Policy. How is your Privacy Policy provided to your respondents?

Not complying with local and international privacy laws might mean the sample provider is operating illegally. An example privacy policy is given in the ESOMAR Guideline for Online Research.

- Our privacy policy can be found easily at the panel website: https://oysterclub.asia/#terms-cooperation.
- iSampling also follow best practice principles for online panel and data collection processes, including ESOMAR World Research Codes and Guidelines.
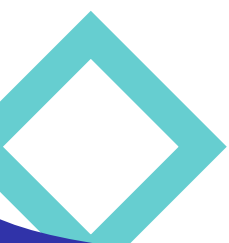
25. Please describe the measures you take to ensure data protection and data security.

The sample provider usually stores sensitive and confidential information on panelists and clients in databases. These data need to be properly secured and backed-up, as does any confidential information provided by the client. The sample provider should be able to provide you with the latest date at which their security has been evaluated by a credible third-party.

- Data is stored on devices located in Czech Republic, Europe. They belong to project owner - iSampling. Devices are locked in secured datacenter, surveilled 24/7 by security agency and cameras including devices used for back-ups.
- Respondent passwords are stored in hashed form in database
- Only internal team of IT professionals with contractual obligation for maintaining confidentiality have access right to administer iSampling servers and applications in datacenters. No external subjects are allowed to access or maintain devices.

26. What practices do you follow to decide whether online research should be used to present commercially sensitive client data or materials to survey respondents?

There are no foolproof methods for protecting audio, video, still images or concept descriptions in online surveys. In today's social media world, clients should be aware that the combination of technology solutions and respondent confidentiality agreements are "speed bumps" that mitigate but cannot guarantee that a client's stimuli will not be shared or described in social media.

- Sharing of any information from surveys is forbidden in the terms and conditions of the panel community.
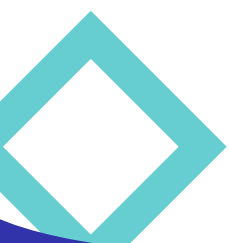
27. Are you certified to any specific quality system? If so, which one(s)?

Being certified may require the supplier to perform tasks in a pre-determined manner and document procedures that should be followed.

- iNMS is registered as a Consultant Level 1, under The Consultant Data Center, which was established in accordance with regulations of the Office of Prime Minister on Procurement B.E. 2535 (1992), under the direction and control of the Public Debt Management Office and the Ministry of Finance, to be a hub of information on consultation and consultants for the public and private sectors.
- iSampling follows ESOMAR Guideline for Online Research.

28. Do you conduct online surveys with children and young people? If so, do you adhere to the standards that ESOMAR provides? What other rules or standards, for example COPPA in the United States, do you comply with?

The ICC/ESOMAR International Code requires special permissions for interviewing children. These are described in the ESOMAR Online Research Guideline. In the USA, researchers must adhere to the requirements of the Children's Online Privacy Act (COPPA). Further information on legislation and codes of practice can be found in Section 6 of ESOMAR's Guideline for Online Research.

- iSampling does not provide sample of target groups under 18 years old.