

**SAMRA Ethics Checklist:
Publishing Opinion Polling and Survey Results
(Source: ICC/ESOMAR International Code on Market and Social Research, 2008)**

The validity and value of public opinion surveys depend on:

- Research technique
- Honesty and objectivity
- Presentation and use of findings

	Findings, interpretation of findings and recommendations must be clearly distinguishable from each other.
	Researchers must be consulted about the form and content of publication.
	Published results must not be misleading.
	Conclusions must be adequately supported by the data.
	Any recommendations for a standard publication format in print must take account of the different styles, layouts, etc. of widely varying types of publication.
	The percentages of participants who give 'don't know' answers (and in the case of voting-intention studies, of those who say they will not vote) must always be given where they are likely to affect the interpretation of the findings significantly. When comparing the findings from different surveys, any changes (other than minor ones) in these percentages must also be indicated.
	Whatever information may be given in the published report of the survey, the publisher and/or the research organisation involved must be prepared on request to supply the information.
	Technical information necessary to assess the validity of published findings must be available.
	Published findings must state clearly:
	(a) the name of the research organisation carrying out the survey;
	(b) the universe effectively represented (i.e. who was interviewed);
	(c) the achieved sample size (number of interviews actually reported) and its geographical coverage (broad regions of the country – national or other such as urban areas only or a specific geographical area – represented) and the number of sampling locations used as an indication of the adequacy of the sample design;
	(d) the dates of fieldwork;
	(e) the sampling method used (and in the case of full random probability samples the response rate achieved);
	(f) the method by which the information was collected (face-to-face, telephone interview, internet panel etc.);
	(g) whether weighting procedures or other statistical methods were used to adjust the results and the universe used for the weights, and it is recommended that the raw data is made available wherever the findings reported differ substantially from the raw data collected in the field.
	(h) the relevant questions asked. In order to avoid possible ambiguity and misunderstanding the actual wording of the question should be given unless this is a standard question already familiar to the audience or it is given in a previously published report to which reference is made. This is particularly important where the actual wording of the question is critical to the interpretation of the findings, and where the reported answers can be affected by the precise form of the question or its context – especially on politically or socially sensitive issues.
	Except where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The survey reported on is very extensive and complex and where the media report can therefore provide only a relatively brief overview of the total survey - Where an article summarises the results of a number of surveys, when again it would be too complicated to give all the key information for each of the surveys referred to. Also, where a given survey is reported on 'serially' (for example in the course of several consecutive issues of a newspaper) it might be unnecessary to repeat all the technical details in every issue. - In the case of broadcast media, it may not always be possible to give information on all the above points. As a minimum, points (a) through (f) above must be covered in any broadcast reference to the findings of a public opinion poll, preferably in visual (written) form where practical. in which case the reader who wants additional information should be told how and where to get it.