

Title: *Rethinking Economic Survey Practice: Data Quality, Trust, and Innovation in an Increasingly Uncertain Environment*

Date: Thursday, 10 September 2026 (Two 90-minute afternoon sessions)

Location: Stellenbosch, South Africa

Objective

This special session, **spearheaded by OECD in partnership with the BER, SARB and KOF**, will address urgent challenges facing the credibility and relevance of economic surveys. It will explore how technological and methodological innovations can enhance data quality, engagement, and inclusiveness in a rapidly changing environment.

Audience

Academic researchers, official statisticians, private and public data practitioners, and policymakers involved in economic and business statistics.

Core Themes

1. Reviving Engagement & Reliability

- Global decline in response rates and rising survey fatigue
- Budget and resource constraints
- Design sensitivity and mode effects affecting credibility
- Mistrust and data aversion in polarized environments

2. Innovative Survey Techniques

- Using AI to adapt questionnaires, analyse responses, and understand respondent behaviour
- Innovations in economic indicator development and the continued relevance of business cycle measurement tools
- Integration of multiple data sources (administrative, mobility, card, and geospatial)
- Harmonization across public and private data ecosystems
- Use of nowcasting and high-frequency data
- New methods for measuring uncertainty

3. Statistical Inclusion & Informal Economies

- Addressing registry gaps and under-representation of industries and informal activity
- Improved weighting and calibration techniques
- Mobile and app-based data collection in developing economies
- Strengthening under-resourced statistical systems through innovation



Format and Sessions

The event will bring together **invited academic and non-academic speakers alongside contributions from others** through presentations, speeches, and potentially a round-table discussion to foster exchange and collaboration.

Indicative session themes include:

- *Engagement & Trust in Modern Survey Practice*
- *Smart Surveys: Adaptive Design and Real-Time Integration, Nowcasting and High Frequency*
- *Designing for Inclusion and Utility: Capturing the Informal, Under-represented Industries and Uncertainty*



Topics of Interest

We invite contributions that explore new approaches to improving the design and relevance of economic surveys. Preference will be given to contributions offering **cross-country perspectives** or **practical applications** addressing current challenges.

- Rebuilding engagement and addressing declining response rates amid tighter budgets
- Integrating administrative and alternative (survey) data sources
- Advances in measuring expectations, uncertainty, and informality, alongside new approaches to nowcasting and high-frequency data analysis



Submission Guidelines

Submit an abstract of **no more than 300 words** by **31 May 2026**

Use the submission form at ciret.org and select **“Special Session”** as the topic

If you already have a CIRET account, log in and submit under **‘My papers’**; otherwise, please register first

Selected contributions may also be invited for **panel discussions, other conference sessions, or post-session publications**



Context

This special session forms part of the **2026 CIRET Conference**, held from **9–12 September 2026** in **Stellenbosch, South Africa**, under the main theme:

“Exploring New Frontiers in Economic Monitoring and Forecasting.”

The session aims to bring together experts to share practical experience and new insights for strengthening economic survey practice in a decade marked by uncertainty and rapid change.