



# MSRA OPINION POLLING GUIDELINES

Enhancing Marketing & Social Research in Africa

# Agenda



- ❑ Introduction to MSRA
- ❑ MSRA Membership
- ❑ Political Opinion Polling in Kenya
- ❑ Standards to be adopted in Opinion Polling

# Introduction to MSRA : Who we are



The Marketing & Social Research Association (MSRA) is a professional body established in 1998 to provide a forum within which research practitioners can work together in a spirit of cooperation, support and mutual goodwill to ensure professionalism in the industry.

# MSRA : Vision & Mission



## Vision:

To provide a platform to bring together professionals interested in building a world class research industry in Africa

## Mission:

MSRA exists to meet the professional needs of members through:

- Growing a wide based membership that is inclusive and participatory
- Disseminating and upholding best practice (both local and international)
- Making available relevant information, knowledge and education
- Living the code and embracing self-regulation

# MSRA Codes



## **Code of Practice:**

Aimed at promoting self-regulation and the highest professional standards for researchers in Africa. The Code of Practice provides a comprehensive guide on research principles to be adhered to in the industry. The Association has adopted and endorsed the ICC/ESOMAR Code in addition to its own regulation guidelines.

## **MSRA Code of Ethics:**

Was launched on the 30th of July 2015. It is aimed at establishing common and acceptable standards of practice and behavior in the industry. The launch was only the beginning of a journey towards creating an environment conducive to producing quality research produced with a high level of integrity. We have adopted a step by step plan for the implementation.

# Achievements thus far...



## **Training opportunities:**

Aimed at providing practitioners with opportunities to continually sharpen their skills and knowledge base. These come in form of basic and advanced training

## **MSRA Accreditation Training:**

MSRA in partnership with GfK Verein came up with the MSRA Accreditation Training Program in 2013. This was a 2 year program that seeks to improve the quality of data collection in Kenya by setting up Supervisor and Interviewer Training Academies. The Program's aim was to provide capacity building support to the market research industry in Africa, understanding that such strategic investments is key to doing business sustainably.

# Achievements thus far (Cont'd)



## **MSRA Industry survey:**

Aimed at gauging the health of the industry on an annual basis. MSRA results have been included in the ESOMAR world industry survey since 2005.

## **Other Activities:**

MSRA holds other events (e.g. talks, social activities, etc.) where members meet and network. An annual conference is also held where both clients and research agencies come together to explore current industry trending topics

# Membership: Corporate Membership



MSRA offers a diverse range of memberships as shown below:

## **Corporate Membership – for companies:**

- Full Corporate Membership
- Interim Corporate Membership
- Client Corporate Membership

Visit [www.msra.or.ke](http://www.msra.or.ke) to know more about MSRA membership.



# Membership: Current Corporate Members



- ❑ Consumer Options Ltd
- ❑ Digital Divide Data Kenya
- ❑ Infinite Insight Ltd
- ❑ Infotrak Research & Consulting Ltd
- ❑ IPSOS Ltd
- ❑ Kantar Kenya
- ❑ Nielsen Kenya Ltd
- ❑ Pan African Research Services
- ❑ SBO Research Ltd
- ❑ Dalberg Research
- ❑ Geopoll
- ❑ Ajua
- ❑ Sagaci Research
- ❑ Frontier Consulting
- ❑ EED Advisory Limited
- ❑ Silikon Consulting Group Ltd
- ❑ World Class Research Ltd

# Membership: Individual Membership



MSRA Individual Membership is open to those who spend a major portion of their professional time in planning, directing, executing, interpreting or presenting social or marketing research projects.

**MSRA Individual Membership** is divided into the following categories:

- Fellow Membership
- Full Membership
- Associate Membership
- Research Operations Contract Staff Membership
- Overseas Membership

Visit [www.msra.or.ke](http://www.msra.or.ke) to know more about MSRA membership.

# Current Board Members



## ☐ Chairperson

Susan Chege

☐ **PARS**

## ☐ Secretary

John Paul Murunga

☐ **GeoPoll**

## ☐ Treasurer

Emily Were

☐ **IPSOS Ltd**

# About ESOMAR...



- ESOMAR is the *‘essential organisation established in 1948 for encouraging, advancing and elevating market research worldwide’*. It has over 4,900 members around the globe
- MSRA adheres to ESOMAR Code and standards
- ESOMAR also provides ethical and best practice guidelines in its Code and Standards (including opinion polling)
- ESOMAR actively promotes self-regulation in partnership with a number of associations across the globe - including MSRA

# The MSRA Opinion Polling Standards

# Polling Rationale



*“The right to **speak out vigorously** on governmental and corporate policies is one of the most staunchly defended freedoms of the world.”*

*(Dr. George H. Gallup – Founder WIN/Gallup International)*

*“The advent of modern public opinions, dealing as they do with important political, social and economic issues of the day help to provide an opportunity to let government officials, public and private institutions, and the public itself **know where the people stand on these issues.**” (The Methodology of Public Opinion Polling in South Africa: Measuring the Pulse of the People by Mari Harris)*

# Polling Rationale (Cont'd)



*“The extension of survey research to the developing, democratizing world portends important shifts in the way we study public opinion, democracy, and comparative politics. While the actual tool of the survey appears the same in form, social conditions often mean that its application differs from the Western standard in important ways, and may produce some important alternatives to the normal Western textbook methods. Moreover, the political and social context of (political/democratic) transition means that the content of questionnaires as well as the purpose of systematic public opinion research also differs quite substantially from the standard academic survey research paradigm in Western democracies, producing as many political impacts as scientific ones.” (Dr. Robert Mattes (2007))*

# Who benefits from Opinion Polling?

Properly conducted opinion polls provide important and useful information to a range of groups. They provide:

- ***The public*** with an opportunity to express their views and be heard. Opinion polls also provide voters with indications of whether their hopes & desired political outcomes will be realised, and thus allows for more 'strategic' voting.
- ***Politicians and political parties*** with valuable feedback on public attitudes, opinions and intentions. As well as measures of likely outcomes of elections. A guide to strategic decisions may also be garnered.



# Who benefits from Opinion Polling? (Cont'd)



- ***The media*** with access to accurate & objective data for reporting to its listeners, viewers and readers
- ***Academia*** with data for examining trends, patterns, clustered attitudes & views etc used to conduct deeper analysis & evaluations of a multitude of factors and related stakeholders
- ***Civil Society/NGOs and other interested bodies*** who can use opinion polls to monitor, check and keep tab on the impact of political communication on public opinion amongst other things

# Challenges for Political Pollsters

- Sensitivity around general elections which may be hotly contested
- Heightened scrutiny of opinion polls due to the nature of the research topics
- Unregulated pollsters providing opinion polls for public consumption through media, which do not adhere to the standard & regulated practices of research sampling, survey methodology & reporting, leading to biased & unrepresentative data collection
- Selective & incomplete media coverage leading to biased reporting
- Omission in reporting the distinction between scientific and unscientific polling (e.g. TV SMS/call-ins)
- Election outcomes vs. opinion poll predictions based on samples, incomplete voter registers and other factors that influence voter decisions but which are not captured or revealed through opinion polling surveys

# Are Opinion Polls Fool-Proof?

Opinion polls are snap-shots of how a representative sample of people think at the time of the opinion poll. There are factors that can cause changes in these opinions, these include:

- **Time Factor:** Events (e.g., voter education & election campaigns) close to the election date and after the last round of opinion polling has taken place that impact on voters' final candidate choices.
- **The Undecided Lot/ Refused to Answer:** THE IMPACT OF the “UNDECIDED/ or would not answer respondents can be significant WHEN THE CONTEST IS VERY CLOSE.

# Are Opinion Polls Fool-Proof? (Cont'd)



- **Voter Turn-out:** Largely unpredictable variation in voter-turnout, with patterns varying from one election to the next (due to a range of reasons, including personal, access to polling stations, weather etc.)
- **Late Euphoria - 'Waves' Among Certain Voting Blocs:** Potential impact of 'last-minute' swings in opinion, with at least some voters often deciding to join what is perceived to be the dominant opinion at either the local, regional or perhaps even at the national level.

# Proposed Measures for Election Surveys



*“Living the MSRA codes and embracing self-regulation through industry-based political polling standards”*

**Introducing Self-Regulation** as stipulated by ESOMAR

# MSRA Opinion Polling Standards



- *In line with its Vision and Mission, MSRA has established industry opinion polling guidelines through 5 Standards to be followed.*
- *Members are responsible for ensuring adherence to these standards.*
- *The MSRA guidelines are aligned to the regulatory requirements as set out in The Kenya Electoral Opinion Polls Act 2012.*

# Standard 1: Polling Questions

- All members conducting opinion polls must ensure that the questions being asked have minimum bias and ambiguity, to avoid misinterpretation by respondents. The phrasing & positioning of questions should be balanced so as not to influence responses.
- MSRA has harmonised the following standard opinion polling question and recommends that pollsters adopt this format:
  - Presidential candidate (and running mate AFTER THIS IS KNOWN) preference

*“If presidential elections were held today, whom would you vote for if that person were a candidate?”*

*“If you have decided, whom are you intending to vote for as president and deputy-president in the forthcoming election?”*

# Standard 2: Sampling



- All opinion polling samples must be statistically representative of and proportionate to the Specified Population – *using the 2009 Population Census (or any such later population census); or a published voter register.*
- The MSRA recommends minimum sample size (for an election-related national survey) of 1,500 respondents (margin-of-error = +/-2.5%). However, margins-of-error must be shown for any sub-sample findings (e.g., county, parliamentary constituency, gender, etc.).

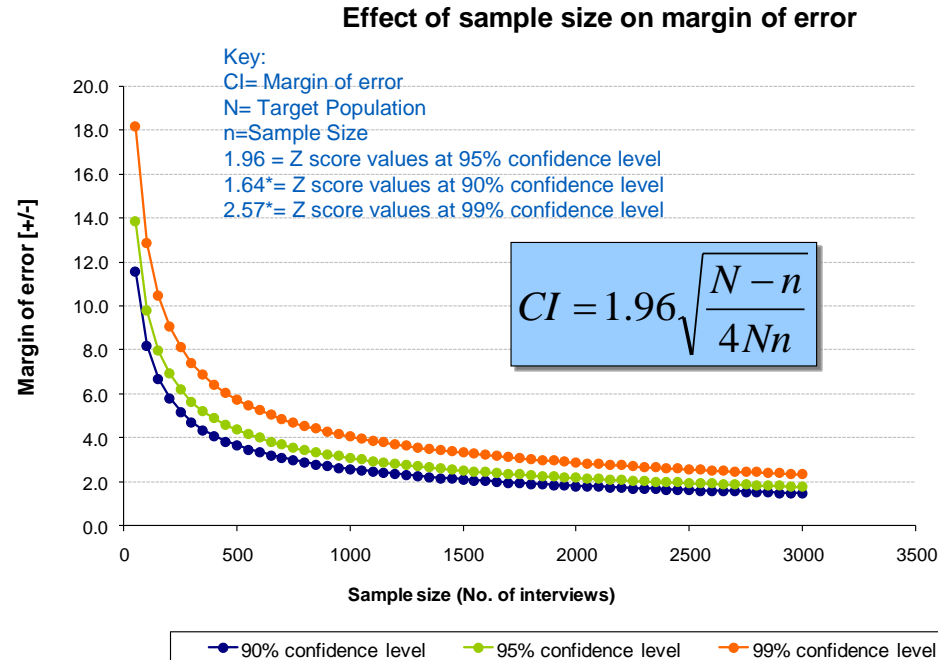
## ESOMAR Standards:

- **Sampling:** A sample size of 1,000 respondents minimum with a larger sample is recommended for instances where the gap between leading parties is expected to be small.



# Margin of Error, Sample Size & Confidence levels

- The margin of error provides an indication on the level of precision that can be reasonably expected from the samples used relative to the actual population.
- All public opinion polls must state the margin of error of the particular survey
- MSRA recommends all opinion poll sample sizes are within the acceptable margin of error range of 90- 99.5 confidence level



# Standard 3: Publication of Political Opinion Polls



- **MSRA stipulates the following:**
  - No opinion poll data shall be released within 7 days of the published election date
  - All pollsters enjoin the media not to publish any polls within 5 days of an election
- **MSRA further stipulates that**
  - Voters' preference-results must be released within 14 days of completion of data collection during the immediate pre-election (official campaign) period

***The Kenya Publication of Electoral Opinion Polls Act 2012** – Stipulates no polls shall be released 5 days prior to an election date.*

### **Examples of Countries' Publication Standards:**

- **US/UK/Australia**- no restrictions, no regulations on publication
- **India**- no publication within 48 hrs
- **France**- no publication within 24 hours
- **Czech Republic**- no publication within 7 days

# Standard 4: Methodology Details to be Published



- To ensure transparency MSRA requires the following details to be published with all public releases of opinion polls:
  - Details of the sampling method used (e.g. *whether random, and if not, on what basis*)
  - Basis of sample size determination
  - Achieved sample, geographical distribution
  - Margin-of-error & Confidence level
  - Demographic details of respondents
  - Interview method (e.g. face-to-face, CATI)
  - Field work dates
- *MSRA recommends that all members releasing opinion polls to the public should provide all of the above details of the survey being published on the members corporate website for reference*

***The Kenya Publication of Electoral Opinion Polls Act 2012 & ESOMAR Standards – Stipulate all of the above***

# Standard 4: Methodology Details (Cont'd)



- To ensure transparency MSRA further requires the following details to be published with all public releases of opinion polls:
  - Language(s) the interviews are conducted in
  - Number of selected individuals who refused to be interviewed
  - If CATI, how phone nos. were obtained
- *MSRA also recommends that all members releasing opinion polls to the public should provide the above details of the survey on the member's corporate website for reference*

***The Kenya Publication of Electoral Opinion Polls Act 2012 & ESOMAR Standards – Stipulate some of the above.***

# Standard 5: Additional Details to be Published



- The identity of the sponsor of any election-related survey where the sponsor is a single client (individual, organisation, etc.)
- Percentage of respondents who refused to answer
- Percentage of those (registered to vote) who do not intend to vote in the next general election

## ESOMAR Standards:

- Incorporates all the above

# MSRA Member Compliance & Adherence



***All MSRA members who conduct political opinion polls are required to confirm compliance and adherence to the MSRA Opinion Polling Guidelines & standards as outlined in this document.***

## ***MSRA Members must:***

- *Sign the attached sheet confirming compliance to the MSRA Opinion Polling Guidelines*
- *Publish a statement of compliance with the MSRA Opinion Polling Guidelines*

***The MSRA website will publish a list of members who have undertaken to comply with the MSRA Opinion Poll guidelines under the opinion polls tab.***

# Recommendations to Stakeholders



- Check whether companies conducting political opinion polls are adhering to standards laid out
- Where evidence suggests that a Member is not adhering to the guidelines herein, this should be reported to the MSRA Ethics Committee (*ethics@msra.or.ke*)

For more information Contact  
**info@msra.or.ke** or visit our website

# Conclusion

- In conclusion, MSRA believes and agrees that...

*“...the full and free right to conduct opinion surveys and publish the results – regardless of whether these annoy, embarrass or irritate the political and business establishment – are one important measure of democracy.*”

*Without public opinion polls, the deep pockets which finance, influence and corrupt our politicians and our government would have more, not less, power. The polls are often a strong counterbalance to the loud voices of the special interests whose political goals are very different from those of the general public. Public opinion would sometimes not be heard if there were no polls.”*

**Humphrey Taylor**



# Signing of the MSRA Opinion Polling guidelines



I \_\_\_\_\_ (name of authorised representative) on behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ (Company name), hereby acknowledge that I have received, read and understood the **MSRA Opinion Polling Guidelines**.

I hereby undertake on behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ (Company name) to fully abide by and comply with the Standards therein, and support its implementation at all times.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness name: \_\_\_\_\_ Witness signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

