

ESOMAR

HBG Answers to ESOMAR Questions for Users and Buyers of Online Samples

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A low-angle, upward-looking photograph of several modern skyscrapers with glass facades. The buildings are arranged in a way that they appear to converge towards the top of the frame, creating a sense of height and scale. The sky is a clear, light blue. A bright yellow rectangular banner is positioned horizontally across the middle of the image, partially obscuring the buildings.

Company Profile

- 1. What experience does your company have in providing online samples for market research? How long have you been providing this service? Do you also provide similar services for other uses such as direct marketing? If so, what proportion of your work is for market research?**

HBG's Response:

HBG is a leading online market research panel supplier providing access to over 5 million healthcare & business audiences in 30+ countries. HBG offers an effective & efficient way of interviewing respondents including niche & hard to reach healthcare audiences.

Founded in Gurugram India, in 2011, HBG is trusted by over agencies, researchers & brands in more than 30 countries worldwide. Since HBG's inception, innovation has been a cornerstone of the company's growth. In 2015, HBG launched the CATI validated & social media verified global online healthcare & business panels.

Today, HBG is a full-service market research data collection agency providing online data collection, CATI, Phone to web services to clients globally. HBG panels are built in compliance with accepted industry codes, including, but not limited to ESOMAR.

HBG is an ISO 9001:2015, ISO 20252:2019 & ISO 27001:2013 certified organization.

HBG has witnessed phenomenal growth in project volumes & has made business research possible in hard to reach regions like ME & Africa.

Through its platform, HBG clients also get access to niche audience groups in many geographies that are not commonly found in offerings from other sample providers. These include healthcare professionals, Surgeons, caregivers, brokers, restaurant owners/managers, HVAC, gamers, mothers of children of specific ages, ethnicities, varied B2B audiences, professionals, and many others.

HBG sources panels through a variety of methods in order to build diverse, representative, & engaged panel communities. Below are the recruitment methods used by HBG.

- Online recruitment through HBG's panel website
- Email recruitment through a HBG newsletters
- Email recruitment using a opt-in lists from D&B etc.
- Telephone-based recruitment
- Face-to-face (F2F) based recruitment

2. **Do you have staff with responsibility for developing and monitoring the performance of the sampling algorithms and related automated functions who also have knowledge and experience in this area? What sort of training in sampling techniques do you provide to your frontline staff?**

HBG's Response:

Yes, HBG's panel management team & sampling team continuously monitors the performance of the company's automated sampling algorithms. These sampling algorithms are developed using best practices to help minimize both source bias and panel-burn risks. HBG's in-house sample success team is trained frequently on efficient sampling approaches and best practices.

3. **What other services do you offer? Do you cover sample-only, or do you offer a broad range of data collection and analysis services?**

HBG's Response:

HBG's data collection services are used by leading market research agencies for the management of large-scale sample operations. The services offered by HBG are online data collection through balanced and validated panels, expert interviews, CATI, Phone to web, programming, data analysis, reporting and presentations. HBG offers qualitative & quantitative data with survey insights.

A photograph of a city skyline, likely New York City, featuring several tall skyscrapers. A prominent yellow banner with a chevron pattern on the right side is overlaid on the image. The banner contains the text "Sample Source and Recruitment" in bold black font. The background shows a mix of modern glass skyscrapers and older brick buildings under a blue sky with some clouds.

Sample Source and Recruitment

4. Using the broad classifications above, from what sources of online sample do you derive participants?

HBG's Response:

As stated above, HBG's sample sources are listed below:

- Online recruitment through HBG's panel website
- Email recruitment through a HBG newsletters
- Email recruitment using a opt-in lists from D&B etc.
- Telephone-based recruitment
- Face-to-face (F2F) based recruitment

5. Which of these sources are proprietary or exclusive and what is the percent share of each in the total sample provided to a buyer?

HBG's Response:

HBG's data sources are proprietary and exclusive. Unless there's a shortfall or time constraint, only proprietary or exclusive sample is used. The vetted partners are brought on board only after the client's approval. 95% of the projects are completed using proprietary panels.

6. What recruitment channels are you using for each of the sources you have described? Is the recruitment process 'open to all' or by invitation only? Are you using probabilistic methods? Are you using affiliate networks and referral programs and in what proportions? How does your use of these channels vary by geography?

HBG's Response:

As stated above, HBG's sample databases have been built carefully using multi-mode approach and advanced means. The same is defined in our response to Question 4, above.

- 7. What form of validation do you use in recruitment to ensure that participants are real, unique, and are who they say they are? Describe this both in terms of the practical steps you take within your own organization and the technologies you are using. Please try to be as specific and quantify as much as you can.**

HBG's Response:

HBG leverages a mix of techniques supplemented by phone based & physical address validation, where possible along with the use of in-house de-duping and digital fingerprinting technologies that identify and limit fraud. Rigorous profiling exercises are conducted using personal and profiled information held in the database. The respondents providing conflicting responses are scrubbed immediately.

For sample only projects, HBG works in close coordination with clients and helps them to deploy appropriate validation checks, including but not limited to analysis of questionnaire completion time, data outliers, unanswered questions and patterned responses. HBG encourages its clients to add straight-lining, speeding checks and red herring questions to their surveys. The respondents that fail on these parameters do not qualify as completes.

- 8. What brand (domain) and/or app are you using with proprietary sources? Summarize, by source, the proportion of sample accessing surveys by mobile app, email, or other specified means.**

HBG's Response:

- hbgknowledge.com

- 9. Which model(s) do you offer to deliver sample? Managed service, self-serve, or API integration?**

HBG's Response:

HBG offers managed services where a project manager executes & manages the project. HBG doesn't offer self-serve or API.

- 10. If offering intercepts, or providing access to more than one source, what level of transparency do you offer over the composition of your sample (sample sources, sample providers included in the blend). Do you let buyers control which sources of sample to include in their projects, and if so, how? Do you have any integration mechanisms with third-party sources offered?**

HBG's Response:

In 95% of the cases, only proprietary or exclusive sample is used. In cases, where we need to vet another panel or panels, the client's permission is taken in advance & they've the right to control the amount of sample they'd like from a particular partner.

- 11. Of the sample sources you have available, how would you describe the suitability of each for different research applications? For example, is there sample suitable for product testing or other recruit/recall situations where the buyer may need to go back again to the same sample? Is the sample suitable for shorter or longer questionnaires? For mobile-only or desktop only questionnaires? Is it suitable to recruit for communities? For online focus groups?**

HBG's Response:

HBG's panel is deeply profiled & as a result we've several sub panels or panel communities like ailments & caregivers panel, sports panel, mother's panel, smartphone panel, automotive panel, business panel and more. Our communities are highly engaged thanks to the panel management & quality norms that we've in place. So, depending on the type of study, we can employ a particular sub panel for the success of a specific study. Our re-contact rates are the best in the industry, thanks to our phone-based validation, physical address validation, social media verification etc.

A woman with long brown hair is looking down at a smartphone on a wooden desk. To her left is a laptop. In the foreground, there are several papers with charts and graphs, and a hand is pointing at one of them with a pen. Another hand is holding a pen over a paper with a line graph. A smartphone is also visible in the bottom right corner.

Sampling and Project Management

- 12. Briefly describe your overall process from invitation to survey completion. What steps do you take to achieve a sample that “looks like” the target population? What demographic quota controls, if any, do you recommend?**

HBG’s Response:

Participants are empanelled using several techniques as stated in previous questions. The respondents are pulled by our automated systems based on the target criteria’s & sample is sent via an email program. The respondent receives an email invite which has information on the survey length & incentive. The respondents click the said survey link to participate in the client survey.

Our sample is nat-rep balanced & the automated systems are programmed to pull & send sample based on the nat-rep percentages of the respective country so this goes a long way in ensuring that the client’s get a balanced & representative sample.

HBG’s internal systems provide adjusted allocations to the sample as & when needed to achieve the proper distribution based on census data for a specific geography. During the fielding process, the client’s reporting tool helps HBG’s project managers to adjust the quotas, as required.

- 13. What profiling information do you hold on at least 80% of your panel members plus any intercepts known to you through prior contact? How does this differ by the sources you offer? How often is each of those data points updated? Can you supply these data points as appends to the data set? Do you collect this profiling information directly or is it supplied by a third party?**

HBG’s response:

HBG has a deeply profiled panel & we capture thousands of data points. All demographic data is stored on our secured server. The basic profiled data that is available & that can be shared with clients in a data set or appended directly to the link is: name, age, gender, ethnicity, education, postal code, year of birth, education level, occupation, state, income, employment etc. Owing to in depth profiling, HBG is able to provide a lot of standard data of the respondents to the clients.

The profiling exercises are run every month to capture new data points & to update existing data points of the respondents. The respondents are proactively reminded to update their profile data so relevant surveys meeting their profile are sent to them. The profiling information is collected directly from the respondents.

14. What information do you need about a project in order to provide an estimate of feasibility? What, if anything, do you do to give upper or lower boundaries around these estimates?

HBG's response:

HBG's bidding team requires the following information from the clients in order to provide a realistic estimate of the feasibility.

- Demographics (age, gender, regions, etc.);
- Non-demographic targeting or screening criteria's
- Quotas or sub-quotas required;
- The number of completed interviews requested;
- The estimated length of interview;
- The estimated incidence rate;
- Additional sampling criteria as applicable (i.e., census rep., balanced send-outs, etc.);
- Exclusions;
- Device restrictions; and

In scenarios of restricted fielding window or very niche groups of audiences or very narrow incidence, we'll provide a range of feasibility to the clients to set correct expectations.

15. What do you do if the project proves impossible for you to complete in field? Do you inform the sample buyer as to who you would use to complete the project? In such circumstances, how do you maintain and certify third party sources/sub-contractors?

HBG's response:

HBG reviews the infield soft launch data & if a project looks impossible to complete due to any scenario, the client is intimated right away. If asked by the client to bring partners on board, we reach out to our carefully vetted partners & share the information about their feasibility & pricing to clients. Our vetted partners have similar panel attributes as HBG & we stand by the quality of their data.

- 16. Do you employ a survey router or any yield management techniques? If yes, please describe how you go about allocating participants to surveys. How are potential participants asked to participate in a study? Please specify how this is done for each of the sources you offer.**

HBG's response:

No, we don't.

- 17. Do you set limits on the amount of time a participant can be in the router before they qualify for a survey?**

HBG's response:

Not applicable.

- 18. What information about a project is given to potential participants before they choose whether to take the survey or not? How does this differ by the sources you offer?**

HBG's response:

The respondents or panel members are sent a generic email invite with the below details.

- The estimated length of the survey
- Incentives involved
- Privacy policy link and terms.

- 19. Do you allow participants to choose a survey from a selection of surveys? If so, what are they told about each survey that helps them to make that choice?**

HBG's response:

No, our automated system chooses the respondents based on the right fit & they're invited through our email program. So, they're not given a chance of selecting a survey.

- 20. What ability do you have to increase (or decrease) incentives being offered to potential participants (or sub-groups of participants) during the course of a survey? If so, can this be flagged at the participant level in the dataset?**

HBG's response:

We've a pay the panel policy & incentives are based of the survey length & the audience in picture. If client would like to increase the incentive, then we can update & send fresh mailers with updated incentive. Yes, this can easily be flagged at participant level.

- 21. Do you measure participant satisfaction at the individual project level? If so, can you provide normative data for similar projects (by length, by type, by subject, by target group)?**

HBG's response:

Respondents can share feedback on our helpdesk email at the end of the survey. This information is continually reviewed by the panel management team & the feedback is immediately acted upon to ensure respondent satisfaction levels.

- 22. Do you provide a debrief report about a project after it has completed? If yes, can you provide an example?**

HBG's response:

Yes, we do & the following is shared with the client at the end of the project.

- Response rate – percentage of panellists responded out of total invited.
- Dropout rate – percentage of panellists who abandoned out of total started.
- OQ rate – percentage of panellists who were redirected to the over quota



Data quality and Validation

- 23. How often can the same individual participate in a survey? How does this vary across your sample sources? What is the mean and maximum amount of time a person may have already been taking surveys before they entered this survey? How do you manage this?**

HBG's response:

We've strict panel management norms & policies. A respondent on our panel can participate in 4 surveys in a month or 1 survey a week. They're blocked from further surveys till their cap is lifted for that week or for that specific month.

- 24. What data do you maintain on individual participants such as recent participation history, date(s) of entry, source/channel, etc.? Are you able to supply buyers with a project analysis of such individual level data? Are you able to append such data points to your participant records?**

HBG's response:

HBG maintains in-depth & detailed participation data which includes: panel joining date; last participation date, transaction history on all surveys; redemptions; and cash rewards accumulated. We can append the user activity data as & when required.

- 25. Please describe your procedures for confirmation of participant identity at the project level. Please describe these procedures as they are implemented at the point of entry to a survey or router.**

HBG's response:

HBG has an in-house digital fingerprinting tool that detects fraud besides several profiling exercises that tracks the response patterns of the respondents. The respondents who're inattentive or who speed or straight-line or provide inconsistent responses are flagged and removed during profiling.

At the entry of the survey, our digital fingerprinting, geo-tagging & dedupe technology removes fraudulent respondents from entering the survey. If respondent is found to be fraudulent, their account is blocked from further participation.

- 26. How do you manage source consistency and blend at the project level? With regard to trackers, how do you ensure that the nature and composition of sample sources remain the same over time? Do you have reports on blends and sources that can be provided to buyers? Can source be appended to the participant data records?**

HBG's response:

As noted above, HBG uses proprietary & balanced panels which are consistent and representative. Using internal panels lends consistency to the data set and results in high quality & meaningful data to the clients.

Our in-depth profiling, balanced, representative panel and stringent panel management norms & policies are ideal for the consistency of the tracking projects.

- 27. Please describe your participant/member quality tracking, along with any health metrics you maintain on members/participants, and how those metrics are used to invite, track, quarantine, and block people from entering the platform, router, or a survey. What processes do you have in place to compare profiled and known data to in-survey responses?**

HBG's response:

HBG has detailed records of respondent's participation in studies. Respondents are quarantined for a specific duration of time once they finish a survey. HBG's automated system ensures that no member takes more than 1 survey a week. A quality score is provided to the respondents based on their activity in the network & once a respondent falls below the minimum quality threshold, they're blocked from further participation.

- 28. For work where you program, host, and deliver the survey data, what processes do you have in place to reduce or eliminate undesired in-survey behaviours, such as (a) random responding, (b) Illogical or inconsistent responding, (c) overuse of item nonresponse (e.g., "Don't Know") (d) inaccurate or inconsistent responding, (e) incomplete responding, or (f) too rapid survey completion?**

HBG's response:

Our data quality & compliance team is dedicated to monitoring undesired survey behaviour. The respondents providing gibberish open ends or poor-quality data are flagged through the survey and removed from the data set to ensure that our clients get access to high quality & meaningful data. The data programming team further ensures that there're multiple checks in place to eliminate speeders, straight-liners.



Policies and Compliance

- 29. Please provide the link to your participant privacy notice (sometimes referred to as a privacy policy) as well as a summary of the key concepts it addresses. (Note: If your company uses different privacy notices for different products or services, please provide an example relevant to the products or services covered in your response to this question).**

HBG's response:

HBG's privacy policy link: <https://www.Hbgknowledge.Com/privacy-policy> .

Our privacy policy and terms address all the personal data norms in line with the guidelines set forth in GDPR and CCPA and a few of the key items are below.

- Processing of personal data
- Types of personal data processed and how it is processed.
- Data retention and sharing of personal data
- Respondents rights

- 30. How do you comply with key data protection laws and regulations that apply in the various jurisdictions in which you operate? How do you address requirements regarding consent or other legal bases for the processing personal data? How do you address requirements for data breach response, cross-border transfer, and data retention? Have you appointed a data protection officer?**

HBG's response:

HBG data protection & privacy policy is completely in line with the GDPR / EU Regulation, effective since May, 2018. HBG has appointed a Privacy Officer (PO) whose responsibility is to oversee the privacy compliance across the company. HBG is fully compliant to all data protection & privacy regulations. A consent is taken from respondents to participate in the research surveys & their participation in the surveys is completely voluntary.

The respondent's privacy rights are honoured (e.g., consent withdrawal; access to respondent personal data, deletion of the personal data upon individual request, etc.) in-line with the regulations.

HBG respondents are informed about all privacy elements and a few examples are as below:

- Identity of the controller
- Contact details of the Data Protection Officer
- Purpose of the processing the personal data
- Recipients of the personal data & Data retention period
- Rights of the users (example: right to: access, rectify, erase, right to withdraw consent at any time)

HBG applies an Information Management Policy for personal data retention, regulating the retention & storage of the personal data according to the type of the research conducted. HBG pseudonymises personal data as soon as possible & anonymises, encrypts the personal data once research projects are closed and archived.

- 31. How can participants provide, manage and revise consent for the processing of their personal data? What support channels do you provide for participants? In your response, please address the sample sources you wholly own, as well as those owned by other parties to whom you provide access.**

HBG's response:

Participants can provide, manage & revise consent by email our helpdesk or support email address.

- 32. How do you track and comply with other applicable laws and regulations, such as those that might impact the incentives paid to participants?**

HBG's response:

HBG's legal team monitors applicable regulatory developments to ensure smooth tracking & compliance of the laws & regulations in local or international markets.

- 33. What is your approach to collecting and processing the personal data of children and young people? Do you adhere to standards and guidelines provided by ESOMAR or GRBN member associations? How do you comply with applicable data protection laws and regulations?**

HBG's response:

HBG complies with applicable national/regional & state laws and regulations, including EU-GDPR & COPPA as well as standards, guidelines provided by ESOMAR.

- 34. Do you implement "data protection by design" (sometimes referred to as "privacy by design") in your systems and processes? If so, please describe how.**

HBG's Response:

HBG complies with the privacy by design in-line with the GDPR/EU Regulation, effective since May 2018. HBG assesses the security and privacy risks all its new initiatives (new research methodologies, technologies, new research products, operational / production flows, etc.) processing personal data, documenting its end-to-end research flows and/or panel management processes.

HBG compliance team oversees the traceability of the personal data across its systems / tools and platforms. HBG regularly conducts internal quality, security, & data audits, identifying the security & data protection risks, and implementing plans containing precise & direct actions.

35. What are the key elements of your information security compliance program? Please specify the framework(s) or auditing procedure(s) you comply with or certify to. Does your program include an asset-based risk assessment and internal audit process?

HBG's Response:

HBG has implemented an information security management system using ISO 27001.

36. Do you certify to or comply with a quality framework such as ISO 20252?

HBG's Response:

HBG complies with ISO and has implemented an ISO 20252 compliance research management system.

The background features a collage of business-related graphics. In the top left, there is a bar chart with blue bars and a line graph with a green line. In the top right, a portion of a calculator is visible, showing numbers like 30, 63, 29, 301, 329.17, 998.87, and 20. In the bottom right, a donut chart is shown with segments labeled 13%, 14%, and 15%. A large yellow rectangle is positioned in the center, containing the word 'Metrics' in bold black text.

Metrics

37. Which of the following are you able to provide to buyers, in aggregate and by country and source? Please include a link or attach a file of a sample report for each of the metrics you use.

HBG's Response:

HBG can provide several metrics on demand and the same can be exported for analysis. Metrics includes number of completes, conversion rates, price etc. HBG can provide data for each of the below based on the client requirements.

- Average qualifying or completion rate, trended by month.
- Percent of paid completes rejected per month/project, trended by month.
- Percent of members/accounts removed/quarantined, trended by month.
- Percent of paid completes from 0-3 months tenure, trended by month.
- Percent of paid completes from smartphones, trended by month.
- Percent of paid completes from owned/branded member relationships versus intercept participants, trended by month.
- Average number of dispositions (survey attempts, screen-outs, and completes) per member, trended by month (potentially by cohort)
- Average number of paid completes per member, trended by month (potentially by cohort)
- Active unique participants in the last 30 days
- Active unique 18-24 male participants in the last 30 days
- Maximum feasibility in a specific country with Nat rep quotas, seven days in field, 100% incidence, 10-minute interview
- Percent of quotas that reached full quota at time of delivery, trended by month