

SOEP Innovation Sample — Scope and Application Requirements

The German Socio-Economic Panel Study (SOEP; www.diw.de/en/soep; Schupp & Frick, 2002; Siedler, Schupp, Spieß, & Wagner, 2009; Wagner, Frick, & Schupp, 2007) offers a new service to the international research community. Some subsamples of the SOEP (the “innovation samples”) are open for user-defined survey questions and non-standard survey measures, e.g., cognitive tests, behavioral experiments, and intervention studies (Richter & Schupp, 2012). In principle, even genetic studies are feasible, which focus on the interaction between social and genetic factors in human development. The expectation is that innovative measures will be met with a high degree of multidisciplinary interest in the scientific community.

Scope: What SOEP-IS offers

The primary goal of SOEP-IS is to allow the application of innovative survey methodologies, including behavioral experiments, to a representative longitudinal sample of the population in Germany. In particular, it is envisioned that procedures can be used in the SOEP-IS that are otherwise considered “invasive” or especially burdensome for participants and therefore are not an option (or only after intensive testing in SOEP-IS) for the main SOEP survey.

Among the innovative measures that go beyond the classic survey scope and could be included in SOEP-IS are (complex) behavioral experiments (e.g., behavior in social dilemma situations), extensive and standardized competence measurements, Implicit Association Tests (IAT), complex procedures to measure time use (e.g., Day Reconstruction Method, DRM), and intervention studies (e.g., the effects of specific training programs over the course of an individual’s employment history).

Features of the SOEP-IS

The collection of data in SOEP-IS will take place substantially later in the year than the core SOEP - as a rule between September and December. The two existing longitudinal samples E (surveyed initially in year 1998) and I (surveyed initially in year 2009) will serve as the foundation for the SOEP Innovation Sample.

Table 1 gives the size of the two existing subsamples, E and I, after the main SOEP surveys of 2010 and 2011, and an estimate of the size of the new supplementary samples for the SOEP Innovation Sample (SOEP-IS). These four subsamples form the new SOEP-IS. It should be kept in mind that only those households that are interviewed personally by an interviewer and not sent a questionnaire from SOEP’s fieldwork organization TNS Infratest Sozialforschung by mail will be included in the SOEP-IS.

A valid longer-term estimate of the evolution of sample size is not possible due to the changing questionnaire content and surveying rhythms in the Innovation Samples. The table below is therefore based on a “hypothetical constant scenario” developed by SOEP’s fieldwork organization Infratest: case numbers on the household level for the years 2013 to 2014 were estimated analogously to the other SOEP samples, based on the assumption that key questions of the current survey design and questionnaire duration will be maintained into the future. These case numbers should therefore be viewed as an upper limit for case numbers.

Table 1. *Expected development of the subsamples in SOEP-IS: Number of households (number of individual respondents is about twice as high).*

Year	E	I	S1	S2	S3	Total
2011	-	1,040				1,008
2012	339	928	1,010			2,267
2013	300	800	750	1,000		2,850
2014	270	750	610	750	1,000	3,380

Note.

E = Subsample E, I = Subsample I, S1 = Supplementary Subsample 2012, S2 = Supplementary Subsample 2013, S3 = Supplementary Subsample 2014.

Application requirements

Researchers from Germany as well as international universities and research institutions are welcome to contact the SOEP Survey Management with a project outline for the inclusion of additional batteries of questions in SOEP-IS by **November 30, 2013** the latest at soep-surveymanagement@diw.de. We will be pleased to advise you prior to the submission of your official application. To guarantee that the new survey questions can be incorporated into the survey wave in 2014, the deadline for applications is December 31, 2013. SOEP survey management will make every effort to serve the diverse scientific disciplines: in addition to the large majority of users in the economic and social sciences, we strongly welcome ideas from researchers in behavioral science, medicine, and biomedicine.

The application must be submitted in English and should contain a scientific description of two to five pages. It should contain precise details of the desired sample size, preferred type of sample (full sample or a systematic subsample), mode of data collection, and repetition of the measurements (if applicable) as well as basic research question(s) or a precise description of the scientific rationale. The application should clearly distinguish the data that will be obtained with the proposed innovation from existing SOEP data on that research topic or question. Furthermore, the application should include an estimation of the total number of minutes required to answer the questions (the shorter that better; more than 15 minutes are impossible to implement). Applications requiring very little response time (one to two minutes) will be given preferential treatment.

All applications will be evaluated on the basis of scientific merit, suitability, feasibility of implementation, and cost (in terms of survey time).

Survey questions requiring no additional measurements will be included in SOEP-IS at no additional cost to the applicant.

However, the applicant is responsible for acquiring the necessary funding from external sources for all non-standard measurement devices, e.g., behavioral experiments or non-verbal data collection (e.g., biomarkers). If it is necessary to integrate additional samples into the SOEP Innovation Sample, the same procedure applies: applicants must finance additional sub-samples that use the SOEP and SOEP-IS as “reference studies” (Siedler & Sonnenberg, 2010).

All data obtained in the SOEP-IS will be made available to the research community in the year following data collection. For special modules and sub-samples financed through third-party funding, special

arrangements can be negotiated. Ultimately, however, all data generated by means of SOEP-IS must be open for reanalysis.

For the complete SOEP-IS regulations and further information on the evaluation criteria and selection process, see: www.diw.de/soep-is .

References

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