



European Social Survey CRONOS Panel

Call Specification for Question Module Design Teams

Brief summary of call

The purpose of this call is to **invite applications to design a set of questions to be fielded on CRONOS-2** (Cross-National Online Survey-2), a **pan-European online panel**. It represents a unique opportunity to gain access to Europe's first large scale probability-based, high-quality online panel. The successful applicants will be able to develop a set of survey questions to be fielded, at no cost to the applicants, on the panel in 12 European nations.

This call therefore offers excellent opportunities to be part of a ground-breaking development in cross-national probability-based research. As the panel uses a 'piggy-backing' approach to recruitment, it will be possible to link the CRONOS-2 data to that from the main Round 10 ESS. **Note the panel only aims to be representative of the online population** (i.e., only those who have internet access for private use will be eligible to participate).

As this is the first time a cross-national, input harmonised panel of this nature has been implemented on such a large scale it remains a developmental project. The aim is to build expertise in cross-national online data collection and to provide high quality data on substantive topics for the research community.

Introduction to ESS

The ESS is a biennial, academically driven, cross-national social survey measuring attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours across countries and over time. Nine rounds of the survey have already been conducted, involving over 30 nations, and employing the most rigorous survey methodology. A fully documented multinational dataset is publicly available from the [ESS Data Archive](#). Fieldwork for Round 10 is underway and will continue until January 2022 (this is later than in previous rounds due to the COVID-19 pandemic). Further information about the ESS is available at www.europeansocialsurvey.org.

The ESS questionnaire consists of two elements: a **core module** of substantive and socio-demographic items (around 100 in total) and two **rotating modules**, each including up to 30 items. Each rotating module covers a single academic and/or policy concern within Europe and is proposed and drafted by a competitively selected team. In Round 10, the selected rotating modules measure attitudes toward democracy, and digital contacts in work and family life. Further information about these two modules is available [here](#). In addition to the rotating modules, the ESS will be fielding a set of questions measuring attitudes towards the Coronavirus pandemic. To learn more about these questions, click [here](#).

Introduction to the ESS CRONOS-2 panel

The CRONOS-2 web panel involves one Welcome Survey and six waves of data collection, to be fielded in 2022¹. CRONOS-2 panellists will be recruited from amongst the respondents to Round 10 of the ESS; at the end of their ESS survey, respondents (aged 18 years or over, and with access to the internet for private use) will be invited to join the web panel. Since the ESS uses a random probability sample approach, this offers a demonstrably higher quality sample compared with self-selected panels that recruit via open invitations. This is further strengthened by the input-harmonised approach used in CRONOS-2, where panel recruitment, setup and maintenance are guided by the same methodological principles in all participating countries. This call therefore offers a **unique opportunity to undertake high-quality cross-national research**.

The panel will (likely) cover 12 different European nations although the final number and countries might change.

- Austria
- Belgium
- Czechia
- Finland
- France
- Hungary
- Iceland
- Italy
- Portugal
- Slovenia
- Sweden
- United Kingdom

In total, the web panel will (normally) comprise six waves, provisionally scheduled for most countries as indicated below. Note that there might be changes to the timing, depending on the local circumstances and expected fieldwork dates for the mainstage ESS. Four of these waves will be available for use by the wider research community, while content for the other two waves (country-specific waves) will be determined by the CRONOS-2 national teams (where they choose to field them). This open call is the second of two and covers waves 4 and 5. The description of the module proposals chosen for inclusion in waves 1 and 2 can be found [here](#). Applicants to this present call are encouraged to indicate if they would prefer to be included on wave 4, wave 5 or both (if proposing a longitudinal module). The panel is primarily envisaged as a vehicle for cross-sectional research. However, we recognise the potential value of the panel as a means of undertaking longitudinal research. Applications should make explicitly clear if this is the intention of the study.

Wave	Group 1	Group 2	Content
1	October 2021	January 2022	Previous call (August 2020)
2	November 2021	March 2022	Previous call (August 2020)
3	January 2022	May 2022	Country-specific content
4	March 2022	June 2022	Current call
5	May 2022	September 2022	Current call
6	June 2022	October 2022	Country-specific content

Module requirements

The ESS ERIC is looking to select modules which will address a key academic or policy concern within the European arena, which will add significantly to the European knowledge base, and will have wide appeal within academia and beyond. Modules should be underpinned by a theoretical model and coherent conceptual framework. **We would particularly encourage submissions that address the EU's H2020 missions as well as applications**

¹Some countries might start in Autumn 2021, while others will start in 2022. The precise timetable is to be determined as the feasibility of face-to-face interviewing for the main ESS becomes clearer.

which help to foster interdisciplinary research between European Research Infrastructures. Submissions which help to address issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic and its wider impact might also be considered. Note that two modules on COVID-19 have already been selected for inclusion in Round 10 ESS survey (for more information see [here](#)).

Each module on the CRONOS-2 panel will contain up to **15 standardised closed survey questions**² and must be suitable to be fielded as part of a general social survey alongside questions on other political and social topics. Modules must be suitable to be fielded as part of an online survey (e.g., there will be no interviewers to provide additional information to respondents, and question content must be suitable to be displayed on small screens). Where an application is for longitudinal repeat measurement, it should not exceed 20 questions in total across both waves³.

In total each wave will comprise in the region of 60 questions, which will last approximately 20 minutes. It will be important to minimise the variation in interview length between respondents and so each module should be comprised predominantly of questions asked of all CRONOS-2 panel members. It is therefore anticipated that modules will contain **little question routing or filtering**. To ensure the effective implementation of this large-scale, cross-national web panel, only proposals using **straightforward questions** will be considered. Modules must aim to **avoid producing data that are potentially disclosive**, as the data will be made available to anyone interested in using it for non-commercial purposes.

It must be possible to develop **equivalent questions to be fielded in a diverse range of countries** across Europe, including countries outside of the EU. CRONOS-2 intends to provide the research community with a rich and novel source of high-quality substantive data. The focus, therefore, will be on the provision of substantive data rather than methodological experimentation. A limited number of methodological (or indeed any split-ballot) experiments can be included but they should be simple (e.g., up to a maximum of three groups per module) and applicants mindful of sample size.

Overview of general guidelines:

- Up to 15 (cross-sectional) or 20 (longitudinal) standardised closed survey questions.
- Complex questions (e.g., vignettes) and those generating multiple data points (e.g., ‘mark all that apply’) will be counted as more than one item.
- Modules should be applicable to the general population (rather than subgroups).
- Questions should be applicable to a wide range of countries, some of which are not part of the EU.
- The concepts of interest should be salient in all relevant languages and contexts.
- If required, up to a maximum of three split-ballot experiments per module.
- Use of simple and familiar words throughout the module.
- Avoid introducing concepts that are difficult to explain to a general population sample or asking questions that they will struggle to answer.
- Avoid long questions and introductions.
- Little routing/filtering within questions.
- The design of the module should be optimised for smartphone respondents (e.g., avoid large grids, long drop-down menus, sliders).
- Questions deemed to be unethical, highly sensitive or potentially detrimental to the panel will not be included.

²Complex questions that take longer to administer (as an indication, a simple item takes around 15 seconds to be answered) or generate multiple data points (e.g., vignettes, multiple choice questions) will be counted as more than one item in the final module.

³For example, this might comprise ten questions asked in wave 4 and the same ten questions repeated in wave 5, or 15 questions asked on wave 4 and five of them repeated on wave 5.

- All modules will go through a rigorous design process and adjustments to the proposed questions should be expected. Applicants must be open to revisions.
- The ESS ERIC Director will have the power of veto of any individual questions or modules, should they be deemed to be inappropriate for use on the CRONOS-2 panel, likely to cause panel attrition, or for any other methodological or ethical reason.
- The questions will need to meet with the approval of the ESS ERIC ethics board.

How the process will work

The four teams selected for each wave (or for multiple waves if longitudinal) will work closely with ESS ERIC colleagues and others on the design of their modules. The head of each team will be expected to coordinate internal discussion within their team and to communicate with the ESS ERIC (although they may delegate this role to another member of their team).

There will be limited time available for the development of question modules (see Timetable on page 8) and there will be no opportunity for piloting or cognitive testing. While we do not expect applications to include fully worked-up questionnaires, **some consideration of questions and provision of examples will be viewed favourably**. The module development process will involve the provision of an initial draft provided by the successful question module design teams (QDT). This will be reviewed by members of the ESS Core Scientific Team (CST) and ESS National Coordinators (NCs) from CRONOS-2 participating countries who will provide consolidated comments. The QDT will then be required to provide a revised draft responding to these comments. This will be subject to iterative further review by the CST and NCs before a final draft is agreed. More detail on the timetable is provided later in this document. Successful teams are expected to sign up in full to the questionnaire design timetable set out by the ESS ERIC and to be fully involved at each stage of the process.

All proposals and documents will be in English, the working language of the ESS. Final decisions on the form and content of the modules are the responsibility of the ESS ERIC Director, considering the views of the QDTs, comments from National Coordinators and the CST, as well as translation considerations. The ESS ERIC Director will have the power of veto of any individual questions should they be deemed to be inappropriate for use on the CRONOS-2 panel. The questions will also need to meet with the approval of the ESS ERIC ethics board.

The ESS is committed to free, open, and non-preferential access to all data collected as part of its surveys. CRONOS-2 panel data will be released via the ESS website as soon as possible after the ESS Round 10 data release in April/September 2022⁴. QDTs will have early access to the data around a month before the final data release to check the provisional dataset. This will provide them with the opportunity to consider (but not publish) articles prior to the dataset's official release.

QDT Obligations

The data collected in CRONOS-2 will provide successful Question module Design Teams with free access to methodologically rigorous data on their chosen topic collected from a random sample. We expect an achieved sample size of around 800 cases per wave in most countries (lower in Iceland, which has a smaller main ESS sample size). However, due to uncertainties about the impact of the pandemic on fieldwork for the main ESS survey, the number may be

⁴ This is later than originally envisaged due to the delays in commencing ESS Round 10 fieldwork.

lower⁵. To ensure the success of the modules, the QDTs are expected to fulfil the following obligations regarding design and dissemination:

1) Design:

- Each QDT is expected to respond to comments on the questionnaire received from the ESS CST and NCs, as specified in the timetable below.
- Each QDT is expected to work with ESS ERIC HQ to summarise the questionnaire design process at the end producing a small report to accompany the data.
- The head of the QDT (or delegated individual) will be responsible for coordinating internal discussions within the team and communicating with the CST.

2) Dissemination:

- Within one year of the release of the CRONOS-2 data, each QDT is required to produce analysis based on the module for the ESS [Topline Findings](#) series. Topline Findings are concise cross-national summaries of particular topics covered in the ESS questionnaire. Due to the smaller number of items a shorter summary is foreseen for CRONOS-2 outputs. QDTs are expected to include data from all countries in the panel.

QDTs may also be asked to contribute to other ESS dissemination activities, for example writing for the ESS blog, as appropriate.

No budgetary provision exists to cover salary or associated costs for the team designing the questions. The ESS ERIC will cover publication costs but cannot cover analysis and writing time. Once appointed, QDTs are encouraged to apply for any additional funding as appropriate to facilitate analysis and dissemination of the module.

Eligibility

- Applications must be made by teams of between two and five scholars, located in at least two different ESS countries. At least one applicant **must** be from an ESS ERIC Member or Observer country (the list of ESS countries can be found [here](#)⁶).
- No ESS CST member may apply (or be part of an extended team that applies) for a question module.
- If an ESS National Coordinator from a participating CRONOS-2 country is included in a team, they will not be permitted to take part in selecting successful applicants.

How to apply

There is a single-stage application process. Applicants should complete and submit a single document in PDF format. The document should address each of five selection criteria detailed below (relevance and rationale, suitability for CRONOS-2, research team, feasibility of implementation, and dissemination plans). Responses to each section should be clearly signposted and conform strictly to the word limits provided.

Questions to address and selection criteria

Covering questions and applicant details

⁵ Face-to-face will remain the main mode of data collection for Round 10 of the ESS. However, countries in which face-to-face data collection is not feasible because of the pandemic will adopt a mixed-mode, self-administered approach (online and paper surveys).

⁶ North Macedonia has confirmed participation for the first time in Round 10.

The first page of the application should include responses to the following fields:

Proposed title for the Module	
Single or repeat measurement within the panel	Single measurement on one wave OR Repeat measurement on multiple waves (delete the text that does not apply)
Principal Applicant	
Position	
Institution (including name of University School or Department)	
Address for correspondence	
Telephone	Email

Relevance and rationale (max. 600 words)

- Is the proposed topic relevant and timely to academic and policy debates in Europe?
- How will the module add to our understanding of the topic theoretically and/or empirically?
- Will the module have wide appeal to academic and non-academic audiences?
- Is the module underpinned by a well-defined conceptual theoretical model?

Applicants should make the case for collecting new cross-national survey evidence on their proposed topic and specifically why they expect the topic to have wide appeal and why it is relevant and timely to both academic and non-academic audiences. They should explain how the module will add to the existing knowledge base and contribute to theoretical and/or empirical understanding of key issues within the European arena.

Applicants should briefly explain if there is a theoretical approach to be adopted and, if so, outline the conceptual framework underpinning the proposed module. If there is no theoretical approach this should also be stated. References to relevant literature should be made here.

Suitability for the CRONOS-2 (max. 400 words)

- What is the value of fielding the module as part of the CRONOS-2 panel (i.e., a cross-national social survey of the general population with a follow-up of on-liners rather than a more specialist survey)? Any applications for longitudinal modules should clearly outline the feasibility for inclusion on the panel and justify the likelihood of observable change across the period (2-3 months). They should also clarify whether the aim is to measure such change at an individual or overall societal level.
- How will the 15 items (or 20 for a longitudinal inquiry) be used in combination with other items from the ESS questionnaire? Applicants should know that the CRONOS-2 data will be linked to the Round 10 ESS data.
- Are the proposed questions relevant and applicable to both EU and non-EU countries?

Applicants should demonstrate that it is both appropriate and feasible to field the proposed module as part of the cross-national panel. It should be appropriate to field the topic as part of a general social survey alongside existing questions on a range of other social and political topics rather than as part of a more specialist survey (e.g., an electoral study). The topic must be suitable to be fielded in multiple countries across a range of different institutional and cultural background settings. It must be feasible to ask questions about the topic via an online

panel survey. The topic must be relevant to the general population; the CRONOS-2 panel will aim to be **representative of the online adult population in each country**. The need to minimise variation in interview length, and the fact that the panel will deliver smaller sample sizes than the main ESS in each country, means that it is not generally suitable for topics aimed at subgroups of the general population. If experiments are proposed, the rationale for including them should be clearly stated.

Research team (max. 250 words)

- Does the team contain representatives from at least two different ESS countries, including one from an ESS ERIC Member or Observer country?
- Does the proposed QDT have the necessary substantive and survey experience and expertise to make the module a success?
- Does the research team include a non-social scientist (this is optional, but might strengthen the application)?

Applications must demonstrate that the proposed QDT has an appropriate mix of substantive and survey expertise and suitable cross-national experience to deliver a successful module. Applicants should outline how the team's skills and experience complement one another, how the team intends to work together to develop the module, and any previous experience the applicants have of collaborating with one another.

Applicants should additionally provide brief CVs (2 sides maximum per team member) as an appendix and these will not count towards the word limit.

Feasibility of implementation (max. 800 words – excluding draft questions which can be in addition)

- Is it viable to operationalise the proposed concepts cross-nationally using up to 15 items in the time available?
- Are there any anticipated methodological or practical difficulties in developing the module (if so, include suggestions for how these might be overcome)?
- Would the fact that the CRONOS-2 data collection is organised with different timeframes for two different groups of countries pose any challenges for implementation or analysis?

Applicants should provide details of how they propose to operationalise their theoretical and conceptual model using up to 15 standardised closed survey questions (or 20 in total for longitudinal applications). They should outline how they propose to operationalise specific concepts, drawing on existing questions and evidence from other surveys where appropriate. Please note that any items to be fielded as part of the module will need to be developed in consultation with the ESS CST and National Coordinators, however, there will be no scope for pre-testing questions.

Applicants should reflect on any anticipated methodological or practical difficulties in operationalising the proposed module as part of the panel. These might relate to the geographical spread of the survey, for example, and the potential difficulty of achieving equivalence across disparate countries. Teams should reflect on how these methodological problems might be overcome.

While it is not expected that applicants will be able to provide a fully drafted questionnaire (and in any event applicants must be open to revision), draft wording, particularly of key variables, will be viewed favourably. This is because it provides evidence of the feasibility of the module given the relatively short time available for drafting once the successful modules have been selected.

Dissemination plans (max. 250 words)

- Does the team have a well thought out and credible plan for the timely dissemination of findings from the module to different academic and non-academic audiences?

Applicants should outline the team's proposed approach to disseminating findings from the module to academic and non-academic audiences, along with an appropriate timeline. Please provide details of any plans to apply for any additional funding to support analysis and dissemination of the module.

THE DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS is 16th April 2021.

NCs from countries participating in the CRONOS-2 panel will assess the proposals with ESS CST members and decide which ones best meet the criteria to be included on the panel. Their decision is final, and **no feedback will be provided**.

- Applications must be made in English and in the format specified.
- Applications should be emailed to ess@city.ac.uk with "ESS CRONOS panel module application" as the subject. Only applications submitted by email will be accepted.
- All applications must be received by **17.00 UK time on 16th April 2021**.
- All applications will be acknowledged within a few days of receipt.

The weighting for each of the five criteria is listed below:

Criteria	Weight
Relevance and rationale	40%
Suitability for CRONOS-2	20%
Research team	10%
Feasibility of implementation	20%
Dissemination plans	10%

Timetable

	Wave 4	Wave 5
Open call advertised (waves 4 and 5)	8 th March 2021	8 th March 2021
Deadline for queries regarding applications	9 th April 2021	9 th April 2021
Deadline for submission	16 th April 2021	16 th April 2021
Selection of successful modules	21 st May 2021	21 st May 2021
Submission of first draft questionnaires by QDTs	11 th June 2021	3 rd September 2021
ESS CST provide feedback on first draft	2 nd July 2021	1 st October 2021
Second draft questionnaires submitted by QDTs	30 th July 2021	29 th October 2021
CST provide feedback on second draft	3 rd September 2021	19 th November 2021
Third draft questionnaires submitted by QDTs and shared with NCs	24 th September 2021	10 th December 2021
Agreement of final modules (subject to NC feedback)	25 th October 2021	24 th January 2022
Programming and translation	November-January 2022	February/March 2022
Testing	February 2022	April 2022
Wave launch	March 2022	May 2022

Further information

If you have any queries regarding the call for CRONOS-2 modules please email: ess@city.ac.uk and Eva.Aizpurua@city.ac.uk, or call Rory Fitzgerald on +44 (0) 7528 946 172. The final date for queries regarding applications is 9th April 2021.

COVID related risk

Due to the potential impact of COVID-19 on the data collection that will be used to recruit this panel, applicants should be aware that the ESS ERIC reserves the right to modify or cancel this initiative (or any of the waves) at any time before or after the modules are selected. Were such a decision to be taken, ESS ERIC would not be liable for any loss caused to the applicants.