

# European Social Survey

## CRONOS Panel

### Call Specification for Question 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 which would then be fielded (at no cost to the applicants) on the panel in around 12 European nations.

CRONOS-1 (proof of concept for this type of panel) was fielded in three countries (see [here](#)).

This call therefore offers excellent opportunities to analyse and disseminate the findings from high-quality cross-national research and 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 is possible to link the CRONOS-2 data directly to that from the main Round 10 ESS. **Note the panel only aims to be representative of the on-line population. As this is the first time a cross-national, on-line, input harmonised panel of this nature has been implemented on a such a large scale it remains a developmental project.** The aim is to test and improve methods in this area.

#### Introduction to ESS

The ESS is a biennial, academically driven, cross-national social survey that charts and explains the interactions between Europe's changing institutions and the attitudes, beliefs and behaviour patterns of its diverse populations. Nine rounds of the survey have already been conducted covering 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 will start in September 2020 and go on until December 2021 (this is later than in previous rounds due to the COVID-19 pandemic). Further information about the ESS is available at [www.europeansocialsurvey.org](http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org).

Following an application to the European Commission, the ESS was awarded European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) status on 30th November 2013. ESS ERIC is funded by participating countries - its Members, Observers and Guests.

ESS ERIC, directed by Professor Rory Fitzgerald, has its Headquarters (HQ) at City, University of London. ESS HQ is supported in the design and implementation of the survey by six other institutions that collectively comprise the ESS ERIC Core Scientific Team (CST): NSD, Norway; GESIS, Germany; The Netherlands Institute for Social

Research/SCP, Netherlands; Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Spain; University of Ljubljana, Slovenia; University of Essex, UK.

ESS ERIC is advised by a Methods Advisory Board (MAB) and a Scientific Advisory Board (SAB). The SAB is responsible for selecting the rotating modules in each round.

The questionnaire for the main survey consists of two elements: a **core module** of substantive and socio-demographic items (around 100 in all); 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 drafted by a competitively selected team.

A list of the topics covered by the rotating modules in Rounds 1-10 and applications from the successful QDTs can be found on the [ESS website](#). The full questionnaires for Rounds 1-9 are also available on the ESS [website](#).

## Introduction to the ESS CRONOS-2 panel

The Round 10 questionnaire will feature recruitment at the end of the face-to-face (or video) interview to an online panel. Participants 18 and over taking part in the interview will be invited to join a panel, which will involve them taking part in a series of online follow-up interviews that will take place periodically throughout 2021 and 2022<sup>1</sup>. CRONOS-2 will be different from most online panels, which typically invite panellists to join through open invites, resulting in self-selected samples. In CRONOS-2, participants will be recruited from the ESS, which uses a random-probability sample approach, as such it will offer a demonstrably higher quality sample compared with some online panels. This is further strengthened by the input-harmonised approach used in the CRONOS-2 panel. 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
- Czech Republic
- Finland
- France
- Hungary
- Iceland
- Italy
- Portugal
- Slovenia
- Sweden
- United Kingdom

In total, it will (normally) comprise six waves, provisionally scheduled for most countries as indicated below. Note that timings will vary between countries due to expected face-to-face fieldwork dates. It is not fully confirmed yet which countries will be in each group. However, it is anticipated that Group 2 will contain the highest number of countries (see the table below).

Wave	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
1	April 2021	October 2021	January 2022
2	May 2021	November 2021	March 2022
3	July 2021	January 2022	May 2022
4	September 2021	March 2022	June 2022
5	November 2021	May 2022	September 2022
6	January 2022	June 2022	October 2022

<sup>1</sup> A few countries will start in Spring 2021, most will start in Autumn 2021 and go into 2022 and some will do all interviews in 2022. The precise timetable is to be determined as the feasibility of face-to-face interviewing for the main ESS becomes clearer.

Four of these waves will be available for use by the wider research community. This open call is the first of two and covers waves 1 and 2. Waves 3 and 6 (optional waves) are anticipated to be reserved for use by individual countries. A further open call for questionnaire space is planned for early 2021 that will cover waves 4 and 5. Applicants to this present call are encouraged to indicate if they would prefer to be included on wave 1 or wave 2 or both.

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. **Although this call is only for the first two waves, we warmly welcome applications from research teams who would be interested in undertaking a longitudinal study that could potentially also include running questions on one (or more) of the later waves (i.e. waves 4 and 5). In these cases, if the application is successful space can be reserved on the later waves in advance of the open call for those.** Applications should make explicitly clear if this is the intention of the study.

## 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 Horizon Europe [missions](#) as well as applications 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 ESS has selected two modules (each of 10 items) on COVID-19 and is developing 10 other items in parallel to be included in its main face-to-face survey. For more information see [here](#).**

Each ESS module on the CRONOS-2 panel will contain up to **15 standardised closed survey questions**<sup>2</sup> 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. Where an application is for longitudinal repeat measurement it should not exceed 20 questions in total across all the waves it is asked over<sup>3</sup>. The CRONOS-2 panel will aim to be a representative general population survey of individuals who are online and therefore particularly lends itself to topics that can be asked of everyone rather than specific sub-samples of the population. Applicants should be aware that the panel is designed only to cover people with internet access for personal use, i.e. **it does not cover people who are offline.**

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. Modules must aim to avoid producing data that are potentially disclosive as the data will be made available for download for anyone interested in using the data for non-commercial purposes.

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<sup>2</sup> Note that complex questions (for example vignettes) that take longer to administer may be counted as more than one item in the final module.

<sup>3</sup> For example, this might comprise ten questions asked in the first wave and the same ten questions repeated in the second wave.

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. A small number of methodological experiments can be included but they should be relatively simple and applicants mindful of sample size.

## 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 design teams (QDT). This will be reviewed by ESS ERIC HQ and a selection of 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 ESS ERIC HQ 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 (see below) 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, likely to cause panel attrition or for any other methodological or ethical reason. 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 2<sup>nd</sup> ESS Round 10 face-to-face data release in April/September 2022<sup>4</sup>. QDTs will have early access to data around a month before the final data release in order to check and 'prove' 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

Successful Question module Design Teams will have free access to methodologically rigorous data on their chosen topic collected from a random sample. We expect an achieved sample size of around 800 interviews 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 face-to-face fieldwork, the number may be lower.

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<sup>4</sup> This is later than originally envisaged due to the delays in commencing ESS Round 10 face-to-face fieldwork.

To ensure the success of the modules, the QDTs are expected to fulfil the following obligations with regard to design and dissemination:

### Design:

- Each QDT is expected to respond to comments on the questionnaire received from the ESS ERIC HQ 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 ESS ERIC HQ.

### 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. ESS Topline Findings are concise cross-national summaries of particular topics covered in the 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 CRONOS-2 panel. The ESS ERIC will cover publication costs but cannot cover analysis and writing time.

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. 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 three 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](#)<sup>5</sup>).
- No 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.

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<sup>5</sup> North Macedonia has confirmed participation for the first time in Round 10.

## Questions to address and selection criteria

### Covering questions and applicant details

The first page of the application should include responses to the following questions.

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

### 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 general 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, which will span less than 12 months and justify the likelihood of observable change across

the period. They should also clarify whether the aim is to measure such change at an individual or overall societal level.

- Is the design of the CRONOS-2 panel (15 standardised closed survey questions fielded on an online general population panel survey fielded in diverse countries, or 20 closed questions fielded over multiple waves) appropriate for the module?
- How will the 15 items (or 20 for a longitudinal inquiry) be used in combination with other items from the ESS core questionnaire (note applications to build on the two Round 10 rotating modules (on democracy and digital social contact) will only be considered in the second call for CRONOS-2)? Applicants should know that the CRONOS-2 data will be linked to the Round 10 ESS data.

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 be **representative of the online adult population in each country**. The need to reduce the variation in interview length and the fact that it will deliver smaller sample sizes than the main ESS in each country means that it is not generally suitable for topics aimed at particular sub-groups.

#### **Research team (max. 250 words)**

- Does the proposed QDT have the necessary substantive and survey experience and expertise to make the module a success?
- Does the team contain representatives from at least two different ESS countries, including one from an ESS ERIC Member or Observer country?
- 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 15 items in the time available (c. 3 months)?
- Are there any anticipated methodological or practical difficulties in developing the module and, 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 three 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)<sup>6</sup>. 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 ERIC HQ and national coordinators, however, there will be no scope for pre-testing or piloting questions.

Applicants should reflect on any anticipated methodological or practical difficulties in operationalising the proposed module as part of the ESS. 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 29th September 2020.**

A group of NCs from amongst the CRONOS-2 panel will assess the proposals with ESS HQ team 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](mailto: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 the day of the submission deadline (29th September 2020)**. Any applications received after this time will not be considered under any circumstances.
- All applications will be acknowledged within a few days of receipt.

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<sup>6</sup> Note that complex questions (for example vignettes) that take longer to administer may be counted as more than one item in the final module.

- 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

Open call 1 (CRONOS waves 1 and 2) advertised	4 <sup>th</sup> August 2020
Deadline for queries regarding applications	15 <sup>th</sup> September 2020
Deadline for submission of open call 1	29 <sup>th</sup> September 2020
Selection of successful modules	13 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
Submission of first draft questionnaires by QDTs	27 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
ESS ERIC provide feedback on first draft	10 <sup>th</sup> November 2020
Second draft questionnaires submitted by QDTs	24 <sup>th</sup> November 2020
CST provide feedback on second draft	8 <sup>th</sup> December 2020
Third draft questionnaires submitted by QDTs	18 <sup>th</sup> December 2020
Questionnaires finalised	8 <sup>th</sup> January 2021
Programming and translation	January / February 2021
Testing	March 2021
Wave 1 launch	April 2021

This is the development timetable for the questions that will be included in Wave 1. A slightly later timetable will be used for questions included in Wave 2 (launches May 2021).

## Further information

If you have any queries regarding the call for CRONOS-2 modules please email:

[ess@city.ac.uk](mailto:ess@city.ac.uk) or call Rory Fitzgerald on +44 (0) 7528 946 172.

A document summarising any queries received (suitably anonymised) together with the response from ESS ERIC HQ will be published on the ESS website. The document will be updated fortnightly. The final date for queries regarding applications is 4<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

## COVID related risk

Due to the potential impact of COVID-19 on the face-to-face data collection that will be used to recruit this panel, applicants should be aware that the ESS ERIC reserves the right to cancel this initiative 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.