

Chapter V

DATA COLLECTION

Part 1

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i) Specification of basic procedures

The basic procedures that were to be followed by each country are laid out below in the 'Specification for Participating Countries'. These specifications were provided for the national funding agencies in participating countries to aid **the selection of National Co-ordinators** (see section 2) and **Survey Organisations** (see section 3), who were both responsible to the CCT for the conduct of each national survey to common specifications and standards. Since the specification of the **survey** itself, of course, played a major role in all the selection processes, it is also included here (see section 4).

The text of the Specification is included below in a slightly modified form. Throughout the specification, we refer to other documents which give more detail about the procedures to be followed that can be found on the ESS website. Direct links are provided where appropriate. See also other chapters in this report (mainly on the sample, the questionnaire and translation) which document how the specification was applied by each country.

Specification for Participating Countries

1 National level appointments

- 1.1 In order to carry out the ESS to a comparable standard within each participating country, each national funding agency is to appoint (or cause to be appointed) a National Co-ordinator and a Survey Organisation. These appointments may or may not be located in a single institution.
- 1.2 The selection process will, of course, vary between countries according to local circumstances and conventions. The CCT may be called upon either to advise on or assist in the selection process. In any event the CCT is to be consulted in sufficient time to ensure that the appointments comply as closely as possible with the specifications outlined below.
- 1.3 The two appointments at national level may be made simultaneously or consecutively. Either way, the national funding agency and others involved should bear in mind the paramount need for its selected appointees to work successfully as a coherent team.
- 1.4 The National Co-ordinator will be the principal contact with the CCT on all aspects of the ESS in each country. He or she will also be responsible to the CCT for ensuring the implementation of a rigorous, standardised set of procedures and methods to a pre-specified design and timetable.
- 1.5 The selection of the National Co-ordinator by each national funding agency is ideally to be made in time for work to start at national level at the beginning of September (month 4) in Year 1¹ of each round of the survey (2001 in Round 1), but at any rate no later than the end of November (month 6) in Year 1. Although their work will not begin in earnest until early in January (month 8), National Co-ordinators should be appointed in time for them to be able to comment and contribute during the

¹ 'Survey years' run from June-June. In Round 1, Year 1 was June 2001-end May 2002; Year 2 was June 2002-end May 2003.

questionnaire design process. The selection of the survey organisation should be made by January (month 8) of Year 1.

2 Specification for National Co-ordinator

2.1 The workload of the National Co-ordinator will vary somewhat over the period of the survey, but a half-time commitment for around eighteen months from the time of the appointment is the minimum requirement for Round 1 (i.e. at least 9 months full-time-equivalent over the period October or November in Year 1 to end July in Year 2). The bulk of the work takes place during the translation and fieldwork preparation periods (May Year 1 to September Year 2). The work required in future rounds will depend upon whether a country has been involved in previous rounds, and whether the National Co-ordinator and/or survey organisation remain the same, or are new to the project.

2.2 The National Co-ordinator will be:

- ◆ a person of standing within the social science community of his/her country
- ◆ familiar at first hand with survey methodology and procedures
- ◆ knowledgeable about past national or sub-national studies of a similar nature and, ideally, with experience of cross-national research
- ◆ fluent in spoken and written English

2.3 His or her role will be to:

- ◆ serve as the link between the national survey operation and the CCT
- ◆ meet with and advise 'ESS sample panel experts' on appropriate local procedures to comply with ESS sampling requirements, including maximising effective sample size
- ◆ meet with and advise ESS question module design teams on question construction
- ◆ co-ordinate translation from English source (pilot and main) questionnaires
- ◆ co-ordinate and interpret national pre-tests according to a common specification
- ◆ conduct or attend the fieldwork briefings
- ◆ monitor fieldwork and data preparation operations, ensuring contract compliance and optimum response
- ◆ authorise code book, data documentation and fieldwork documentation
- ◆ provide the CCT with population data necessary for coverage and response assessment and weighting
- ◆ provide the CCT with pre-specified country-specific context variables in case these are not centrally available
- ◆ submit to the CCT monthly reports on major events that may influence national fieldwork progress or that may be closely related to topics in the questionnaire, according to pre-specified guidelines (for more information on the collection of 'event data' see www.europeansocialsurvey.org/questionnaire/contextual_event_data.doc), starting in August Year 2 and continuing until the fieldwork has ended
- ◆ liaise as necessary with ESS data archive (NSD Norway) about data deposit
- ◆ attend plenary meetings with other National Co-ordinators (for which travel and subsistence costs can be claimed back)

- ◆ prepare a full technical report (to a pre-specified format and standard) containing details of national sampling, fieldwork, response rates, etc. (see National Technical Summary document <http://essdata.nsd.uib.no/passord/dok/NTech2002xx.zip>)
- ◆ advise on post-stratification of national data and any weighting required
- ◆ set up and operate appropriate financial accounting systems

2.4 In countries where the National Co-ordinator works within a separate organisation from the survey institution fielding the survey, some of the tasks above may contractually be transferred to the survey organisation, but the responsibility for their delivery and for liaison with the CCT must continue to reside with the National Co-ordinator.

3 Specification for Survey Organisation

3.1 The Survey Organisation appointed in each country must be capable of, and have a track record in, conducting national probability-based surveys to the highest standards of rigour by means of face-to-face interviewing. All contenders will have to submit proposals and budgets according to the specification of the survey in section 4 below. They will also need to be made aware that for this survey they may have to change or adapt some of their routine procedures and methods in order to ensure cross-national comparability and equivalence.

3.2 A copy of the draft contract or proposal (in English) should be forwarded to the CCT before signing is undertaken. The Specification of the Survey (Section 4 below) should form part of the contract or proposal. In cases where the contract for the first round also spans the second or more rounds, the revised specifications for the relevant round should be agreed and signed off by the survey organisation. A copy of the final contract (in English) should be forwarded to the CCT as soon as it has been agreed by all partners.

4 Specification for the Survey

4.1 *Population coverage*

The survey will be representative of all persons aged 15 and over (no upper age limit) resident within private households in each country, regardless of their nationality, citizenship or language². Potential under-coverage of certain groups, say because of language problems or sampling frame deficiencies, or for any other reason, must be discussed with the sampling panel prior to deciding on the final sampling method, so that the problem can if at all possible be remedied.

4.2 *The sample*

² Please note that questionnaires are to be available in all languages spoken as a first language by 5 per cent or more of the population and interviewers must be available to administer them (see 5.12). For speakers of certain minority languages (spoken by fewer than 5 per cent of the population), however, it may be possible to adapt the questionnaire produced by another participating country. If National Co-ordinators wish to offer translated questionnaires to these smaller minority language groups, they should refer to the CCT for advice. Countries are not, however, required to interview language minorities under the 5% cut-off.

The sample is to be selected by strict random probability methods at every stage and respondents are to be interviewed face-to-face (see section 4.12). Where a sample frame of individuals is not available, countries may use a sample frame of households or of addresses. In these cases, procedures for selecting a household from a multi-household address (where appropriate), and an individual within a household will be specified and agreed in advance with the sampling panel. In any event, the relative selection probabilities of every sample member must be known and recorded, as should any remaining systematic non-coverage problems. Quota sampling is not permitted at any stage, nor is substitution of non-responding households or individuals (whether 'refusals' or 'non-contacts'). Over-sampling of certain subgroups must be discussed and agreed in advance with the sampling panel. See also www.europeansocialsurvey.org/methodology/sampling_strategy.doc.

4.3 *Effective sample size*

The **minimum number of actual interviews to be achieved is 2,000** (except in countries whose total population is less than 2 million, when the minimum number is 1,000). Irrespective of the actual number of interviews, however, the **minimum 'effective achieved sample size' should be 1,500**, after discounting for design effects, or 800 in countries with populations of under 2 million. Thus, with the help of the sampling panel, each country should determine the appropriate size of its initial issued sample by taking into account the realistic estimated impact of clustering, eligibility rates (where appropriate), over-sampling and response rate on the effective sample size. The sampling panel will help to calculate the actual gross achieved sample size required in order to achieve an effective sample size of 1,500 interviews.

4.4 *Documentation of sampling procedures*

The precise sampling procedures to be employed in each country, and their implications for representativeness, must be documented in full and submitted in advance to the expert panel for 'signing off' and subsequently to the CCT for reference. This precaution is to ensure that all countries within the ESS have defensible (and equivalent) national probability samples of their resident (aged 15 and over) populations. The following details will be required before the sampling panel can 'sign off' a country's sample design:

- ◆ a description of the sampling frame and of the units it comprises (including information on units that might be used either to stratify the sample or to vary probabilities of selection for certain subgroups, and estimates of any likely under-coverage, duplication and ineligibles)
- ◆ for those using multi-stage samples, a description of how the units at each stage will be selected to result in a random sample of individuals, plus the inclusion probabilities of units at each stage of selection
- ◆ details of whether and how the survey is to be clustered geographically, and how the initial clusters are to be selected
- ◆ full details of any stratification to be employed
- ◆ the calculations on which the predicted effective sample size has been based.

The final sample design will be fully documented by each national team in the national technical report of the survey. This documentation will be translated into one

or more variables within the national data file to indicate the relative selection probabilities of cases and to enable appropriate weighting strategies to be calculated.

4.5 *Target response rates*

Outcomes of all approaches to addresses, households and individuals in the sample will be defined and recorded according to a pre-specified set of categories that distinguish non-eligibility, non-contacts and refusals (see section 4.8). Model ‘contact forms’ will be produced by the CCT, for translation and use by national teams. Countries may use their own contact forms if they wish, ensuring that these collect data on all of the variables specified by the CCT. Example contact forms can be seen at www.europeansocialsurvey.org/fieldwork/contact_form_address.doc.

The proportion of non-contacts should not exceed 3 per cent of all sampled units, and the **minimum target response rate** - after discounting ineligible (and other ‘deadwood’, as defined by the CCT - see section 4.7) - **should be 70%**. Survey organisations should thus cost their surveys with this response rate in mind and consider what steps may be required to achieve it.

4.6 *Response rate enhancement*

Various specific steps designed to enhance response rates should also be allowed for. They include **at least four personal visits**³ by interviewers to each sampling unit before it is abandoned as non-productive, including at least one visit in the **evening** and at least one at the **weekend**. These visits should be **spread over at least two different weeks**. Similarly, to allow difficult-to-contact people to be located, the **fieldwork period should not be less than 30 days** (see 4.12 and 4.14). All potential survey organisations must be invited to suggest a range of techniques that they believe would enhance the final response rate. Such techniques may include advance letters, toll-free telephone numbers for potential respondents to contact, extra training of interviewers in response-maximisation techniques and doorstep interactions, implementing refusal avoidance and conversion techniques, re-issuing of ‘soft’ refusals and ‘indecisive’ non-contacts, and many others. The CCT has also provided guidance on possible response enhancement strategies (see www.europeansocialsurvey.org/fieldwork/response_enhancement.doc), whilst recognising that the effectiveness of different approaches may well vary between different countries, with different norms, cultural settings, geography, and so forth. Response enhancement techniques employed should be documented in the national technical reports.

4.7 *Response rate calculation and documentation*

The target for the ‘ESS’ response rate is 70%.

Response rate =
$$\frac{\text{number of achieved interviews}}{\text{number of individuals/households/addresses selected, MINUS ineligible}}$$

For the ‘ESS’ response rate **ineligibles** comprise:

³ See 5.12 for exceptions

For samples of *individuals*

- ◆ Respondent deceased
- ◆ Unoccupied/demolished premises
- ◆ Respondent emigrated/left the country long term
- ◆ Respondent resides in an institution

For samples of *households or addresses*

- ◆ Unoccupied/demolished premises
- ◆ Premises not yet built/under construction
- ◆ Non-residential address (e.g. solely business, school, office, factory, institution, etc.)
- ◆ Address occupied, but no resident household (e.g. weekend homes)
- ◆ Address occupied by resident household, but no eligible respondent (no one aged 15 +)

The 'ESS' response outcomes will be calculated and keyed according to a pre-specified standard format, which will include at least the following mutually exclusive categories:

- A) Total issued addresses (or other sample units)
 - B) % not eligible, and why⁴
- C) Total eligible sample (A-B)
 - D) % no contact (after 4+ visits, or if fewer visits made, why)
 - E) % personal refusal, and why (pre-specified categories)
 - G) % too ill or incapacitated
 - H) % household (or proxy) refusal, and why (pre-specified categories)
 - I) % achieved interview (partial & complete)
- J) Total percent response rate (I/C)

4.8 *Field outcomes*

In addition to the recording of case outcomes, field outcomes for **each visit** at **each address** or other primary unit (including for cases which are ultimately unproductive) will be documented and ultimately keyed from a standardised set of similar summary codes for each call. Standard contact forms designed by the CCT should be adapted as appropriate and used in all countries (see www.europeansocialsurvey.org/fieldwork/contact_form_address.doc).

⁴ as defined above for 'ESS' response rate

Budgets should allow for the translation of the contact forms and keying of the contact data collected. Interviewers will also be asked to record for each sample unit a number of observable area, dwelling and household characteristics for each case in the issued sample. This will include:

- ◆ type of dwelling
- ◆ observable security measures
- ◆ physical state of dwellings in the area
- ◆ physical state of the sampled dwelling compared to those around it
- ◆ presence of litter and vandalism

4.9 *Questionnaire design - process*

There will be two questionnaires: a) a face-to-face interview questionnaire of around 60 minutes average duration; and b) a short supplementary questionnaire (self-completion or face-to-face). See www.europeansocialsurvey.org/questionnaire/main_questionnaire.rtf.

a) The interview questionnaire

Around one half of the interview questionnaire will comprise 'core' items (both socio-demographic and substantive in nature) and the other half will comprise 'rotating' items (which vary from round to round) - in up to four separate modules, each to be developed and drafted by competitively-selected, multinational questionnaire design teams. The interviews will be conducted in respondents' homes⁵. The questionnaire will be administered face-to-face either in a paper-and-pencil form or by computer-assisted interviewing - the latter if there is adequate experience of it in a particular country.

b) The supplementary questionnaire

The purpose of the supplementary questionnaire is twofold. Firstly, it contains 21 questions on human values which are asked of all respondents. The second part contains repeat measures from the main interview questionnaire that are asked here in a slightly modified form. Repetition is necessary in order to determine measurement errors and therefore the reliability of the items. In order to allow sufficient questions to be tested in this way without overburdening respondents, the sample is split into **either** 2 groups (each asked 18 test questions) **or** 6 groups (each asked 6 test questions).

The supplementary questionnaire may be administered in several different ways:

1. as an extension of the main interview questionnaire
2. as a self-completion questionnaire to be filled in while the interviewer waits
3. as a self-completion questionnaire to be left behind for subsequent collection by the interviewer or to be returned by post.

⁵ In a small number of cases, where requested by the respondent, the interview may be conducted at a respondent's work or elsewhere outside the home.

However the supplementary questionnaire is administered, a target response rate of 90% of those who completed the main interview must be aimed at. Procedures such as Dillman's Total Design Method should be deployed if necessary in order to achieve this target. For more detail on the design and administration of the supplementary questionnaire, see chapter III.vii of this report.

c) Adding country-specific questions

Any nation may add items to the questionnaire for national rather than multinational use. But any additional country-specific questions may be inserted only **after the ESS questions** in sequence, whether in the interview or in the supplementary questionnaire. If the supplementary questionnaire is administered as an extension of the interview questionnaire, country-specific questions must be added *after* the supplementary questionnaire. The number and duration of any extra questions should be discussed in advance with the CCT to ensure that the extra time of interview does not compromise overall response rates.

4.10 *Questionnaire design - content*

The core questionnaire items cover both socio-demographic and substantive themes. The content of the core will remain largely constant at each round. It includes both independent variables and dependent variables, the latter designed to measure shifts over time in what are considered to be key components of Europe's social fabric. These core questions have been designed in collaboration with a group of experts in different fields and cover the following subjects:

- ◆ public trust in government, politicians and other major institutions
- ◆ political interest and participation
- ◆ socio-political orientations
- ◆ issues of governance and efficacy at the national and international level

- ◆ underlying moral, political and social values
- ◆ social inclusion and exclusion
- ◆ national, ethnic and religious allegiances
- ◆ well-being, health and security

- ◆ demographic composition - age, sex, marital status, etc
- ◆ education and occupational background
- ◆ financial circumstances
- ◆ household circumstances

In contrast, the content of the rotating parts of the questionnaire will be determined 'bottom-up' via a Europe-wide call for proposals from multinational teams of social scientists. The successful proposals will be those that (in terms of relevance and timeliness) are likely to make the greatest contribution to social science and policy in a European context. The quality of the proposals (and the teams) will be evaluated by the ESS Scientific Advisory Board in collaboration with the CCT. Two question module Design Teams will then be selected for round 1, each charged with the lead role in designing one of the question modules.

4.11 *Questionnaire translation, assessment and pre-testing*

Detailed descriptions of procedures and requirements referred to here (including all terms in *italics*) are available on the ESS web site (see www.europeansocialsurvey.org/ess_docs/translation.doc).

Languages to be translated:

- ◆ Translations are required for each language used as a first language by 5 per cent or more of the population.
- ◆ Each country translates its own version(s) of the source questionnaire.
- ◆ Countries sharing languages (France/Switzerland, for example) will prepare their own draft version before consulting together about appropriate translation and possible harmonisation of question wording.
- ◆ In the end, however, each nation will be responsible for ensuring the functional equivalence of its own translation(s).

Procedures to be followed:

The following procedures must be followed regarding translation –

- ◆ National Co-ordinators are required to find suitable individuals to fulfil the three key roles in the approach: *translators*, *reviewer*, and *adjudicator* .
- ◆ Translators are to translate out of English into their strongest language. (In most cases this is a person's 'first' language.)
- ◆ Two translators are required per translated draft questionnaire.
- ◆ Countries should budget for two independent draft translations, although countries sharing languages can use a 'split' translation approach, which reduces costs.
- ◆ Countries will be asked to document their translation/assessment procedures and provide files of this and their questionnaires to the CCT.

Suitable personnel for the translation procedure:

- ◆ Translators should be skilled practitioners who have received training on translating questionnaires.
- ◆ Reviewers need to have at least as good translation skills as the translators but should be familiar with questionnaire design principles, as well as the study design and topic. One reviewing person with linguistic expertise, experience in translating, and survey knowledge is sufficient. If one person cannot be found with these skills, two could cover the different aspects.
- ◆ The adjudicator is responsible for the final decisions about which translation options to adopt, preferably in co-operation with reviewer and translators, but at least after discussion with a reviewer. Adjudicators must a) understand the research subject, b) know about the survey design, and c) be proficient in the languages involved. In the ESS context, the adjudicator may often be the National Co-ordinator or someone of senior standing who works closely with the National Co-ordinator. In some cases, the role of reviewer and adjudicator may be undertaken by the same person.

Pretesting:

The translated questionnaires will be pre-tested in each participating country in accordance with guidelines specified by the CCT on a quota-controlled, demographically-balanced sample of around 50 people. National Co-ordinators may also find it helpful to carry out focus groups or cognitive interviews in order to aid the translation process.

4.12 *Fieldwork*

The main fieldwork period will last for at least one month within a four-month period between 1 September and end December in Year 2 (see timetable in 4.14). Only in special circumstances within a particular country would deviations from this timetable be allowed (in agreement with the CCT).

The first contact with potential respondents, following a possible advance letter, will be face-to-face. Once in contact with a household, interviewers may make (or change) appointments by telephone.

The one **exception** to this is where the country's **sample is one of named individuals with telephone numbers**. Here the first contact may be made by telephone, in order to make appointments to visit the respondent. (Sampled individuals without a listed phone number should be contacted face-to-face).

Interviews may not, under any circumstances, be conducted over the telephone.

Quality control back-checks (in person, by telephone or by post) must be carried out and documented in a pre-specified form on at least 5% of respondents, 10% of refusals and 10% of non-contacts.

Interviewers' assignment sizes (workload) should not exceed 24 issued sampling units (i.e. 24 named individuals, households or addresses) and no interviewer should carry out more than two assignments.

All interviewers will be personally briefed by the National Co-ordinator or members of the research team from the survey organisation before carrying out an assignment, drawing on detailed interviewer instructions prepared by the CCT. Briefings should cover in detail respondent selection procedures (if applicable) and registration of the calling process using the standard contact forms. Sections of the questionnaire that require special attention should be pointed out and explained carefully to interviewers.

Fieldwork progress must be closely monitored, including producing a fortnightly report on response. (see www.europeansocialsurvey.org/fieldwork/progress_reports.doc).

4.13 *Coding and editing*

Most items in the questionnaire are pre-coded. A few socio-demographic items will be recorded verbatim and subsequently coded by the survey organisation according to specified classifications and standards. Further items in the questionnaire require

country-specific variants, which are also post-coded subsequently to standard code frames. The relevant questions and corresponding code frames are:

- ◆ **respondent's and partner's occupation:** recorded verbatim and coded according to ISCO88.com
- ◆ **respondent's and partner's education:** coded according to modified version of ISCED-97
- ◆ **respondent's industry:** coded according to NACE Rev.1, 2-digit version
- ◆ **parents' occupations:** recorded verbatim and deposited as a separate text file
- ◆ **respondent's first** (and, where appropriate, second) **language:** coded according to ISO-639-2
- ◆ **country of origin:** coded according to ISO 3166-1
- ◆ **religion:** coded according to a common ESS code frame

Where country-specific variants are not post-coded to standard frames (e.g. voting behaviour), details of the country-specific item must be recorded in the National Technical Summary document . Further details of the classifications and standards used in the ESS can be found in the ESS Data web site <http://essdata.nsd.uib.no>.

The Survey Organisation will also implement a set of pre-specified range and logic checks, which may have already been implemented in those countries where computer-assisted interviewing is being employed. Only when a country's dataset has 'passed' these checks will it be signed off for central archiving and submitted to the NSD Archive. The national data-files will include a record for each selected sample case, indicating response outcome plus interviewer-recorded items and a geographical identifier. All information from the contact forms for both respondents and unsuccessful contacts (ie the total selected sample) will be submitted to the NSD Archive as a separate datafile alongside the interview data. They will then be followed soon by a detailed country-specific technical report containing a pre-specified collection of facts and figures relevant to future analysts of the data. Both the National Co-ordinator and the Survey Organisation should then be prepared to clarify or rectify problems subsequently identified by the Archive as it cleans and merges the country data-files.

4.14 *Timetable*

Function	YEAR 1											YEAR 2												
	Qtr 1			Qtr 2			Qtr 3			Qtr 4		Qtr 1			Qtr 2			Qtr 3			Qtr 4			
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Co-ord team appointments	■	■	■	■																				
Partner team appointments	■	■	■	■																				
Q'aire Design team appointments	■	■	■	■																				
Q'aire development & cognitive tests				■	■	■	■	■																
Sample design and selection				■	■	■	■	■																
Field agencies selection					■	■	■	■																
Field quantitative pilots									■	■	■	■												
Pretests and main fieldwork													■	■	■	■								
Database design													■	■	■									
Data coding/cleaning															■	■	■	■						
Data deposit to Archive																■	■	■	■					
Data checking/weighting																■	■	■	■					
Data proving																	■	■	■	■				
Data release																						■	■	
Technical reporting																						■	■	■

(Timetable continued)

The ESS Archive (NSD) will merge the national datasets into a combined multi-nation dataset that will be released publicly and to all national data repositories as soon as it is signed off by the CCT. This initial release may, however, have to exclude any national dataset that arrives after the deadline of end January Year 2, or for which the technical documentation is late or incomplete. Further releases containing late deposits may be considered.

4.15 *Ethical guidelines*

The study subscribes to the Declaration on Ethics of the International Statistical Institute (ISI, <http://www.cbs.nl/isi/ethics.htm>), to which all national teams will be asked to adhere (in addition to any current code obligations they may have).

4.16 *Copyrights*

No national data (or interpretations of such data) must be released or published until the merged dataset is officially released by the ESS data archive at NSD Norway. Thereafter, the data will be available without restriction as a resource for the social science communities in all participating countries and beyond to quarry at will.

4.17 *Costs*

The Survey Organisation should break down the estimated costs of the survey into each of the following categories:

- ◆ research time/project management
- ◆ translation
- ◆ pre-test
- ◆ liaison with NC (if applicable)
- ◆ liaison with CCT where appropriate
- ◆ preparation of questionnaire and other field documents (layout, printing and/or programming)
- ◆ postage and telephone costs
- ◆ fieldwork (including travel, briefings, incentives - if any - and quality control)
- ◆ coding
- ◆ editing and cleaning data
- ◆ data deposit
- ◆ technical report
- ◆ other (specify)