

SOEP Service Activities and User Support Features

(A) "Standard Service"

Data Service

- Conceptualizing and implementing main survey and pretests
- Processing and editing data; cross-sectional and longitudinal consistency checks
- Producing a bilingual label system (German, English)
- Production of user-friendly variables and datasets supporting longitudinal research
 - Time-consistent status variables
 - Basic "biography files"
 - Files with data on minors
 - Pointer variables linking data on different individuals (child-parents; partner-partner)
 - Comprehensive generation of annual incomes, including microsimulation of taxes and SSC
 - Geo-coded information (→ poster "[Regional and Spatial Information in SOEP](#)")
- Data distribution (in general on DVD) to licensed SOEP Data users (→ poster "[SOEP Data User Contracts](#)")
 - National / EU-version (100 %)
 - 95% Scientific Use Version outside EEA
 - 50% Teaching Version
- Maintaining an updated list on data quality issues and bug fixes

Metadata / Documentation (Online & DVD)

- **SOEPinfo**: a web-based information system (frequencies, item-correspondence, topics, programming tools, link to survey instruments)
- Questionnaires (in original layout - German and English)
- Fieldwork reports (TNS Infratest)
- Extensive documentation
 - Desktop Companion (DTC) – The SOEP User's Guide
 - Generated variables
 - Derived datasets
 - Weighting and imputation
 - Pretests

International data infrastructure

- Production of cross-nationally harmonized data
 - Cross-National Equivalent File (CNEF 1984+)
 - Luxembourg Income Study (LIS 1984 +)
 - European Community Household Panel (ECHP 1994-2001)
 (→ poster "[Data Access](#)")

User Support Instruments

- **SOEPHotline** <soepmail@diw.de>
- Individual user support by phone and e-mail
- **SOEPlistservers** DIW Berlin and Cornell University, Ithaca/NY (USA)
- **SOEPLIT**: a searchable database containing bibliographic references to more than 5,000 SOEP-based publications
- **SOEPnewsletter**: a quarterly newsletter with information on SOEP and related projects (→ poster "[SOEPnewsletter](#)")
- Mentoring and support for visiting researchers (using sensitive geo-coded data at DIW Berlin)
- Annual introductory workshop for new German users
- Bi-annual introductory workshop for new international users (at Cornell University, Ithaca NY/USA)

(B) Recent and Future Innovations

Data Service

- Generating more user-friendly variables (e.g., labor market experience)
- Generating more harmonized variables for cross-national comparative research (e.g., ISCED, CASMIN, NUTS, ISCO, NACE, Canberra Group)
- Providing more quality assurance in longitudinally harmonized data (e.g., health information on height, weight, BMI)
- Producing a "long format" database, thus simplifying panel research (→ poster "[Restructuring the SOEP Database - Perspectives and Outcomes](#)")
- Improving imputation techniques (multiple imputations of the "household income screener" and "individual and household wealth data")
- Extending the production of "biography files" to better capture the complete life course (e.g., BIOAGE01/03/06/17, BIOTWIN, BIOBRTHM)
- Extended pointer system: relatives outside the household (genetically sensitive pointers)
- Geocoded information (→ poster "[Regional and Spatial Information in SOEP](#)")
- Linking to socio-economic "microm" data (neighborhood indicators)

Metadata / Documentation

- Fieldwork reports in English language
- Documentation of various scales being used in the SOEP according to the electronic Compendium of Social Science Items and Scales (*Skalenhandbuch*)
- Quality reports & survey methodology papers on ...
 - Non-response and attrition
 - Interviewer effects (→ poster "[The Impact of Interviewers' Personality on Measurement Error](#)")
 - Measurement issues around income and wealth
- Providing more paradata (e.g., information on the data collection process within CAPI)

International data infrastructure

- Incorporation of cross-nationally harmonized SOEP data on wealth into the Luxembourg Wealth Study (LWS)

User Support Instruments

- **SOEPmonitor**: improvements in the documentation of results (as a benchmark for the results users receive)
- **SOEPreremote**: a system that allows remote access to sensitive geo-coded data at county level (→ poster "[Data Access](#)")
- **SOEPgeo**: supporting the link of detailed spatial information to SOEP data at block level (to be analyzed on DIW premises only (→ poster "[Data Access](#)")

In-house Service Innovations

- providing academic advice to other longitudinal studies and laboratory studies (e.g., COGITO (→ poster "[Basics: Psychological Research and the SOEP](#)"), BASE II (→ poster "[The Berlin Aging Studies](#)"), Early Childhood Intervention Study)
- SOEP as reference data or control sample for more specialized samples

(C) Networking Among Users

- **SOEPconference**: Bi-Annual International SOEP User Conference
- **SOEPnewsletter**: relaunch of layout and contents (→ poster "[SOEPnewsletter](#)")
- Bi-annual **User Survey**: We moved from a paper-and-pencil to a web-based survey using a professional software solution (SPSS)
- Promotion of SOEP by running own **SOEP information booths** at major conferences in all relevant disciplines (economics, sociology, psychology)
- **SOEPawards** for best presentations (at SOEP user conferences) and best publications
- **"SOEPpapers** on Multidisciplinary Panel Data Research": Working paper series launched in 2007 as a pre-publication platform for SOEP users (→ poster "[Multidisciplinary Discussion Papers with SOEP Data](#)")

(D) Capacity Building

- **SOEP@campus**: major improvements of teaching about the structure of SOEP data and longitudinal analyses (→ poster "[SOEP@campus](#)")
- *In the planning stage*: Production of public-use *Campus Files*, thus enhancing the use of SOEP data for teaching purposes

References

Selected Publications to raise awareness of SOEP (incl. CNEF):

- Frick, Joachim R., Jenkins, Stephen P., Lillard, Dean R., Lipps, Oliver and Wooden, Mark (2007): The Cross-National Equivalent File (CNEF) and its Member Country Household Panel Studies. *Schmollers Jahrbuch - Journal of Applied Social Science Studies*. 127 (4): 627-654.
- Wagner, Gert G., Frick, Joachim R. and Schupp, Jürgen (2007): The German Socio-Economic Panel Study (SOEP) - Evolution, Scope and Enhancements. *Schmollers Jahrbuch - Journal of Applied Social Science Studies*. 127 (1): 139-169.
- Kohler, Ulrich and Kreuter, Frauke (2005): *Data Analysis Using Stata [using SOEP data]*, Stata Press.
- Wagner, Gert G., Goebel, Jan, Krause, Peter, Pischner, Rainer and Sieber, Ingo (2008): Das Sozio-oekonomische Panel (SOEP): Multidisziplinäres Haushaltspanel und Kohortenstudie für Deutschland – Eine Einführung (für neue Datennutzer) mit einem Ausblick (für erfahrene Anwender), *ASTA Wirtschafts- und Sozialstatistisches Archiv*. 2 (4): 301-328.