Job submission instructions for the
\textit{SOEP} remote System at DIW Berlin

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Please note that we assume that you have a basic knowledge of the
statistical package Stata, and that we are not a helpdesk for Stata.
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1 BASIC INFORMATION

1.1 How to access the SOEPremote system

The databases of SOEPremote can be accessed only by preparing a STATA job request in the specific SOEPremote format. This job request follows the normal STATA batch conventions (STATA 8.0, for Linux) with a few exceptions and modifications that are needed for the SOEPremote system to process your request. These exceptions, conventions, and other details concerning job submission are described in this document. You must submit your job request by sending an e-mail to: soepremote@diw.de. Please note that the database cannot be downloaded. Direct access to the microdata is not possible, with the exception for users visiting DIW in Berlin (for further details please contact Katharina Spiess (kspiess@diw.de)). In order for the SOEPremote processing system to accept a job request, you must register with the DIW to obtain a user identification code and a password and sign a pledge stating that you will abide by the projects rules for accessing data and publishing results. You can send your request for registration or any questions to the SOEPhotline (soepmail@diw.de)

1.2 Some remarks on job submission for the SOEPremote system

The SOEPremote system resides on a Linux/Unix Network at the DIW Berlin. The microdata are housed on a secured data server on the network in an area that is secure and can not be accessed from outside of the DIW. Jobs are received at an internet node located at the DIW and are forwarded automatically to the SOEPremote operating system. SOEPremote will automatically process your jobs and return the standard STATA listings to the e-mail address you gave us when you became a user (you can always ask us to temporarily or permanently change it). Processing time varies and depends on the number of users that are using the system at the time you submit your jobs and, of course, the complexity of your jobs. As a rule of thumb, you may expect your results to be back within one hour. In case the number of jobs in our system is low, you can receive your listings back within minutes. Maintenance on our system will cause longer delays. Remember that the SOEP-Team does not guarantee a fixed maximum delay, nor do we accept responsibility in case your listings have not been returned within the normal expected timeperiod.

1.3 Privacy or confidentiality rules

Printing or listing out individual data is prohibited

Do not try to print out (parts of) datasets in any way. Please abstain from commands like LIST or TAB on continuous variables such as PERSNR, the weights, or income variables. Such commands will be detected by the SOEPremote system, and those listings are not returned to the user,
but are directed to our review. The review is a security provision where all long (and thus suspect) listings are sent.

**Long listings**

If you combine many commands in the same job the length of the resulting listing will grow accordingly. Even though all commands themselves may be strictly allowed, the fact that the listing exceeds a certain length will cause it to be directed to our review. As these listings have to be examined manually, this not only means an additional burden for our team, it also causes longer delays for you to receive your results. Therefore we advise you also in your own interest, to split such programs over several separate jobs and to use some of the options for specific statistical packages suggested in this document (at this time only for stata).

**SOEPremote** is a true workaholic and works seven days a week and 24 hours a day. Unfortunately computers are not perfect and it can happen that SOEPremote takes some unscheduled time off. We try to detect and solve these problems as quickly as possible. However, when they occur at night (CET time), during the weekend or during other holidays, we won’t be able to fix it until the next working day.

### 1.4 Dataset $kreise: Additional Indicators at County Level

Additional information at county level is available in the dataset $kreise. For detailed information about what kind of additional data is available in this dataset, please read the documentation available at our SOEP website or contact Katharina Spiess (kspiess@diw.de).

### 2 VERY IMPORTANT! Remarks about your e-mail client

1. Your jobs should be written inside the body of an e-mail message and not as an attachment to such a message.

2. It is important that you disable some of the more advanced settings of your E-mail editor:

   - DO NOT use html formatted E-mails!
   - Do not use colour, bold cases, etc.
   - Do not use electronic business cards, auto-confirmation (which informs you whether the person that you sent an E-mail message to has opened your message), etc.
   - Our system needs to receive your job as plain ASCII e-mail message.
3 Structure of the SOEP remote job submissions

3.1 Stata job syntax

Header

The first 4 lines of your job will allow you to be recognised as a SOEP registered user and will thus give you access to the SOEP database. They are essential for ALL jobs and for Stata, they should be as follows:

```
** user = your username
** password = your password
** package = STATA
** project = GSOEP
```

After these first lines you can write your normal stata program lines, bearing in mind the following points, which are specific to SOEPremote:

**File identification:** The references to datasets make use of aliases defined in global macros/variables. After the dollar sign, the macros have the base-name of the dataset you wish to use. If you want to use the dataset `ppfad.dta` you just need to write `$ppfad`. For some examples please see table 1.

Table 1: Dataset name conversion from original SOEP to SOEPremote

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOEP dataset</th>
<th>SOEPremote macroname</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ap.dta</td>
<td>$ap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tp.dta</td>
<td>$tp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ah.dta</td>
<td>$ah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>th.dta</td>
<td>$th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apgen.dta</td>
<td>$apgen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tpgen.dta</td>
<td>$tpgen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>biomarsm.dta</td>
<td>$biomarsm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ypbrutto.dta</td>
<td>$ypbrutto</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Be careful with typing mismatches: wrong abbreviations will result in a "file not found" message in your listing. Remember: all the datasets have to be referred to in lowercase (Stata is case sensitive).

Delimiter: The delimiter is not mandatory in SOEPremote/stata, but we strongly recommend to introduce one in order to avoid problems of multiple or long lines.

Intermediate files: You may need to save intermediate datasets for later use (in the same job), for example to append or merge two datasets. When doing so, please always save your intermediate files with the following command:

```
save $mydata/myfile, replace ;
```

The macro $mydata indicates the path where your temporary intermediate datasets will be saved. Substitute myfile with a unique name you want to give to your dataset.

Privacy or confidentiality rules: Do not use the commands screened out as data protection problems by SOEPremote, such as list (see above Privacy or confidentiality rules).

Automatic set-up: There are things SOEPremote does automatically when processing a stata job request. For this reason you should never use the command: set mem Xm (as it is automatically set to the maximum) and never exit stata after you finish your commands.

Stata "ado" files: We have installed the official (stb) Stata ado files that are commonly used by researchers. If you have an ado file that you would like us to add, just send an email to Jan Goebel (jgoebel@diw.de) and we will do so if possible.

Note on long listings in STATA: To avoid too long output using, for instance, logit or probit functions, the option “, nolog” can be put at the end of the command. And you can also make use of the commands quickly” or “qby”. For further information please have a look at the corresponding help files of these commands.

3.2 Stata commands your are not allowed to use with SOEPremote

Because of privacy and confidentiality rules some Stata commands are not allowed within a SOEPremote job, for a list of these commands see table 2.
Table 2: Disallowed Stata Commands within *SOEPremote*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stata Command</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>!</td>
<td>Temporarily invoke operating system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>getfilename</td>
<td>Command for handling path-filename specifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cd</td>
<td>Change directory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>copy</td>
<td>Copy file from disk or URL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cscript</td>
<td>Begin certification script</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dir</td>
<td>Display filenames</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>Execute commands from a file (other than your email)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drop</td>
<td>Eliminate variables or observations (see below)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>file</td>
<td>Read and write ASCII text and binary files</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>infile</td>
<td>Reading ASCII data into Stata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>keep</td>
<td>Keep variables or observations (see below)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>list</td>
<td>List values of variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>log</td>
<td>Echo copy of session to file or device</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>macro</td>
<td>Macro definition and manipulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mkdir</td>
<td>Create directory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>net</td>
<td>Using the Internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>print</td>
<td>Printing output</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>set_defaults</td>
<td>Reset system parameters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shell</td>
<td>Temporarily invoke operating system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ssc</td>
<td>Install and uninstall packages from SSC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sysuse</td>
<td>Use Stata's shipped datasets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>webuse</td>
<td>Use dataset from web (!!!)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>type</td>
<td>Display contents of files</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The *SOEPremote* equivalent for *drop* and *keep*

Instead of using Stata commands to select observations and variables (*drop* and *keep*) you are bound to use the equivalent *SOEPremote* ado files *soepdrop* and *soepkeep*. The commands have exactly the same syntax as the original commands and are working exactly the same way. The only difference is, that your selection statement will be checked whether at least three cases are left in memory.

Description of the command syntax from the Stata online help:

```
help for drop, keep, clear
manual: [R] drop
dialog: drop/keep
```

Eliminate variables or observations
3.3 Use of external data with SOEPremote

An analysis of data at county level often necessitates additional use of external information and merging this data with the SOEP. However, we do not except any datasets as attachment in your mail. The only way to use external data is to setup your external dataset within your do file. You can do this with the command input, as you can see in the following example:

```
input id var1 var2
4.58 55
1.86 60
1.61 .
end
```

4 Output from SOEPremote

SOEPremote acts very polite, whatever message you send to SOEPremote, you will always receive an answer. The e-mail you receive will contain either of the following:

1. The listing with the output of the job execution if you followed all the SOEPremote rules above. SOEPremote will automatically forward you the listing containing the output of the job execution. Please note that this will be within the text of the e-mail message, and NOT as attachment as a log file. This will be returned to the address that you provide when you register with the SOEP staff (and NOT to the address from which you sent the e-mail!).

2. A warning because of long listing. There are two scenarios dealing with long listings:

   (a) Review queue: in case the job is fully executed but the size of its listing is larger than a given limit, the job is automatically put in the review queue and a message is automatically sent to you saying that your job has to be manually reviewed by the staff. In this case, you can expect that within two working days you will either receive the listing with the output of the job execution, if no confidentiality
3. An error message, which can be of three different types:

(a) **Wrong package/project:** in case you specify a non-existing package or project in the first 4 lines of your job submission (for the Syntax of these first lines, see section 3.1), the job cannot be executed, and you will receive a message telling you clearly what was wrong. The error message will be returned to the address that you provide when you register with the SOEP staff (and NOT to the address from which you sent the email!).

(b) **Wrong userid/password:** in case you do not specify a valid user-id and password, SOEPremove cannot recognise you as a registered SOEPremove user and will thus not execute the job. Please note that in this case the error message will be sent back to the e-mail address from where you sent the job (and NOT the one you provided when you registered!).

(c) **Wrong header:** in case SOEPremove cannot find the first 4 lines (the header), and can thus not recognise you as a registered SOEPremove user, it will automatically and immediately inform you accordingly, with a message to the e-mail address from where you sent the job (and NOT the one that you provided when you registered!). Please note that this can happen both if you omit (or mistype/misplace) the first 4 lines, or if there was a non-ascii or rich text character in the text of your e-mail message (see the very Important remark about your E-mail client above, section 2).

5 Some recommendations and advices

1. It is advisable that you give a subject to your e-mail so that you can easily distinguish the listings from one another in your out and inbox.

2. It is advisable that you keep the code of all the (important) jobs you send to SOEPremove, as there is no way of obtaining them again from SOEPremove.

3. It is strongly recommended that you carefully check the Documentation on-line at the SOEP-homepage (in particular the Desktop Companion).
4. We strongly recommend that all statistical operations performed with the SOEP database make use of the appropriate weighting variables.

6 Addresses for further information

If you still have any problems concerning the use of SOEP data via SOEPremote, please contact us at the addresses below.

Administrative questions: SOEPhotline (soepmail@diw.de)
Geocode data and access: Katharina Spiess (kspiess@diw.de)
SOEPremote questions: Jan Goebel (jgoebel@diw.de)