

SOEP Mission Statement¹

Mission

The German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP) is an **independent**, non-partisan **research-driven infrastructure unit** that provides nationally representative longitudinal data (SOEP-Core, SOEP-IS) and related datasets (SOEP-Related Studies) on private households in Germany to researchers worldwide.

The SOEP team is recognized internationally for theory-oriented basic research as well as applied and policy-oriented research in the social, behavioral, and economic sciences and in survey methodology. The SOEP communicates its research findings to the broader public in an accessible and understandable way, thus promoting **knowledge transfer from science to society**.

The SOEP study is designed from a **multidisciplinary** perspective and collects data for **basic, applied, and policy-relevant research** to improve the understanding of human behavior, economic decisions, mechanisms of social change, and the impacts of political decisions. It takes the household context, the neighborhood, and different institutional settings and policy regimes into account, and also makes use of data from external sources. **Boost samples** are added regularly to keep pace with societal change. SOEP datasets are **linked to data from other sources** in line with data protection regulations to expand the potential for scientific analysis. The SOEP's partnerships with **studies worldwide** promote the use of SOEP data in international comparative research.

Research questions and SOEP survey content are determined solely by scientific criteria. The SOEP provides **user-friendly panel and context data** of the highest quality to the research community and ensures methodological transparency. The data are used primarily in the social, economic, and behavioral sciences but increasingly in other disciplines as well.

Cornerstones of our work

Every year since 1984, the SOEP has surveyed thousands of households across Germany on their economic and social living conditions, behavior, subjective well-being, and attitudes and preferences from an **intergenerational life-course perspective**.

The SOEP places the highest priority on protecting the confidentiality of respondents' data by ensuring strict adherence to European and German **data protection** regulations and maintaining the highest standards of research ethics.

The SOEP is constantly developing and improving its **measurement methods** to push the state of the art in survey methodology. Innovative research designs are regularly incorporated into the SOEP study to increase the analytical potential of the data. The **SOEP Innovation Sample (SOEP-IS)**, which was built up between 2012 and 2016, has become an integral element of the SOEP research data infrastructure and is expanding the possibilities for **causal analysis** of SOEP data through the inclusion of social scientific **field experiments**. SOEP-IS offers international researchers a unique opportunity to collect data to address their own research questions.

¹ https://www.diw.de/en/diw_01.c.392080.en/mission.html

Experience and insights gained through new survey forms and research questions in SOEP-IS are integrated into the main SOEP survey.

SOEP data are made available free of charge in line with the **FAIR principles for scientific data management**.² User support is provided through a comprehensive range of information and services that reflect the technical and methodological state of the art.

The SOEP holds regular **workshops and classes** to pass knowledge and skills on to the next generation of researchers, and provides diverse learning opportunities and resources tailored to meet users' needs.

The SOEP is part of a national and international network of scientific users. These connections are fundamental to the SOEP team's research and infrastructural activities and help us to continually **improve the quality** of the SOEP survey, research, and services.

Researchers in the SOEP group publish **methodological, applied, and basic research of the highest quality** in economics, sociology, psychology, and other fields in the social sciences. Their research focuses on important topics and issues in modern societies (for instance, social inequality and migration). Their work is founded on an **empirical and analytical understanding** of scientific research.

The SOEP is engaged in numerous **collaborations and joint projects** with scholars worldwide and will move further in this direction in the years to come.

Vision

The SOEP is constantly striving to set new national and international standards in the conception, collection, and user-friendly preparation and distribution of household panel data and related research, and to lead the field internationally in the quality, originality, significance, and rigor of its work.

² FAIR stands for “findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable”.
<https://www.force11.org/group/fairgroup/fairprinciples>