GESIS Online Panel Pilot Study General Overview

The GESIS Online Panel Pilot Study consists of an initial CATI-recruitment interview (probability based sample, including landline and mobile telephone numbers), followed by eight monthly online surveys. Respondents to the CATI-recruitment interview (ZA5581), who had agreed to participate in the online panel by providing their email addresses, received an email invitation with a link to the first online survey. In the following, the respondents received such invitations for participation every month for the total duration of eight months. The overall concept for the online part was to have a leading topic for each monthly questionnaire and to include some demographic questions in every wave not to burden the respondent with unpleasant factual questions. The most important demographic information had been collected during the recruitment interview. (For participants of short interviews the demographic information, which was supposed to be collected on telephone during the recruitment interview, was collected online at a later time.) An integrated dataset of the demographic information of all waves (ZA5590) and a supplemental dataset for paradata collected during the online interviews (ZA5591) will be provided.

The average duration of each monthly questionnaire was conceptualized to be around fifteen minutes. Generally respondents have one month for filling out a questionnaire, but they also had the possibility to do so at a later stage. The last date for filling out the questionnaires for the first study was 31 December 2011, for the second and the third study it was the 31 May 2012.

The design has both longitudinal and cross-sectional aspects: monthly waves are designed as cross-sections with various topics; the longitudinal component includes survey evaluation questions, which are asked at the end of every monthly questionnaire.

Most of the questions used in the online questionnaires were originally conducted within other German and international surveys. The reasons for replicating the questions were twofold: first, in the course of the project the feasibility of asking questions via the Internet which are of interest for the social sciences were assessed; second, for the purposes of data quality assessment, comparisons with external benchmarks were planned as part of the project. For these reasons, most questions come from the German General Social Survey (ALLBUS) 2010 and the German version of the European Social Survey 2010, large cross-sectional face-to-face surveys conducted by GESIS.

Some other surveys, from which questions were implemented in the course of the panel, include questions of the German Socio-economic Panel (GSOEP 2008), the Eurobarometer, and the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP). Borrowed questions were generally implemented
using the original question wording. In some cases these were tailored to the self-administered mode.

The main topics of the monthly questionnaires were: Wave 1: Multitopic introductory wave (ZA5582), Wave 2: Education and employment (ZA5583), Wave 3: Family life (ZA5584), Wave 4: Religion and values (ZA5585), Wave 5: Ecology (ZA5586), Wave 6: Social networks (ZA5587), Wave 7: Politics (ZA5588), Wave 8: Multitopic (focus on personality) (ZA5589).