

ESS Round 11 self-completion data collection protocol

Introduction and background

This document outlines the self-completion data collection protocol for ESS Round 11. Countries that are testing the self-completion approach during ESS Round 11 (2023) should follow the guidance in this document. The guidance is not, however, prescriptive. For this stage of testing, please discuss any necessary planned deviations with the CST before starting the data collection. Please remember that all mainstage ESS Round 11 fieldwork must be conducted face-to-face, following the Round 11 ESS Specification (available via myESS).

In this document, we outline two data collection approaches for self-completion: postal recruitment only and fieldworker-assisted data collection. Before presenting details on these approaches, we outline each stage of the self-completion design.

Sample design and size

The eligible population for the self-completion survey should be the same as the face-to-face approach: all persons aged 15 and over (no upper age limit) resident within private households in each country, regardless of any other characteristic such as their nationality, citizenship, or language. If there are practical issues with including under 18s/under 16s in your country, this should be discussed with ESS HQ (ess@city.ac.uk).

For almost all countries, we anticipate that the sample frame already chosen for the face-to-face survey can (and should) be used for the self-completion approach. Whilst the sample frame is likely to stay the same, the design itself may need to be amended. For example, if you are using “postal recruitment only” for the self-completion approach (see options later in this document) it is recommended to discuss the options for a more efficient design with your SWEP expert.

Any changes to your sample design need to be agreed with your SWEP expert in advance of fieldwork. For sample designs requiring respondent selection within dwellings or addresses, the next birthday method should be used in all cases.

In a small number of countries, where sample frames of dwellings or addresses do not exist, it will be necessary to enumerate dwellings. This should be done in the same way as was proposed for face-to-face fieldwork – with pre-enumeration so a sample frame is drawn in advance of data collection.

It is expected that, in most cases, response rates for the self-completion survey will be lower than for the face-to-face approach; thus, it would be good to build in a high gross sample size for self-completion testing, if possible (but we acknowledge what is possible will vary between countries). There is no required sample size for testing self-completion at Round 11. In order to assess differences between sub-groups, it would be ideal to achieve a sample size of 1000 cases in this test. However, if this is not feasible at Round 11 please discuss options with ESS HQ (ess@city.ac.uk) and the SWEP. It will be very useful to conduct even a small-scale test to investigate the feasibility of ESS’s self-completion approach in each country, and this is still encouraged even if only small sample sizes are possible.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire for the self-completion survey will be very similar to the ESS R11 source questionnaire for the face-to-face survey. As far as possible, a unimodal design is being used between the face-to-face and self-completion questionnaires; this means that question design/format will only be adapted from the face-to-face survey where strictly necessary. There will be some changes, largely based on ensuring that the self-completion questionnaire can work on paper and web. These include:

- The MTMM questions have been removed from the self-completion survey.
- Questions with different versions / randomisation will be revised so only one version is included.
- The format and the order of some questions may be altered to make them suitable for self-completion (e.g. the education questions in section F).
- The start of the questionnaire may be a little different to ensure it is appealing and links to the invitation letter.
- There will be no 'don't know' or 'refusal' codes on the self-completion versions. Respondents will be instructed to leave questions blank if they don't know the answer or don't want to answer¹.
- Hidden codes in the face-to-face questionnaire will usually appear on the self-completion versions.
- Some instructions will be repeated less frequently or removed.

There will also be minor changes to question wording and instructions to reflect the self-completion format and these will be clearly documented to NCs. However, the substance of the questions, number of answer codes and response format will usually be the same in all modes. Additional instructions will be added to reflect the self-completion format: for example, to make respondents aware that they can leave questions blank if they don't know the answer/don't want to answer and that they can come back and complete sections later if needed. Variable names and labels will almost always be identical to those used in the face-to-face survey.

We currently intend to use the full ESS R11 questionnaire for the self-completion survey (notwithstanding the changes above).

Instruments

The self-completion approach must include a mixture of an online survey and a paper questionnaire.

A source (English) version of the online survey will be programmed by Centerdata in their survey platform². This will be shared in spring 2023 with NC teams who expect to test the self-completion approach alongside Round 11. Teams will use Centerdata's TranslationCTRL system for inserting adapted translations, with input from ESS HQ (and the ESS Translation Team, where necessary) to ensure consistency in this process. Both ESS HQ and a named member of the NC team and/or survey agency will also have access to the programme and data once it is collected. The translated web and paper questionnaires for each country/language need to be thoroughly checked by NC teams prior to the start of data collection; these also need to be tested with a range of different devices (PC, tablet, smartphones).

A landing page (website) needs to be set up by each National Team to allow the respondents to access the web survey using the link provided in the mailings. It is recommended to associate this page with a simple link that can be remembered and typed by the potential respondents. This can be the survey name either in English or in the main language (e.g., <http://www.europeansocialsurvey.uk>). The content of the landing page will present the survey and set out the main details on data protection. This information should be provided in all the languages that will be fielded in the country. Each NC Team is to be responsible for buying the web domain and set up the landing page; for any queries about this task, please contact ESS HQ (ess@city.ac.uk). Please note that the landing page will need an SSL certificate (this is available with most of website providers). A template with the recommended text for the page will

¹ The decision to remove the non-response categories is considered necessary to have harmonised questionnaires for both the web and paper questionnaires. The impact of this choice on non-response has been subject to preliminary analysis by ESS HQ based on an experiment in three European countries (see more information on page 5), which found that overall non-response rates were not consistently higher than usually found in the face-to-face survey and in many cases were actually lower.

² Respondents will be able to complete the web survey using any device they wish (desktop/laptop/tablet/smartphone).

be provided by ESS HQ via email alongside the other self-completion materials.

From the landing page, the respondents will access the survey via a link. After doing this, they will be asked to insert their unique access code, provided in the letter, to start the web questionnaire. (Each respondent's access code should also be printed onto the paper questionnaire sent to them.) NC teams are responsible for creating their own access codes and providing them to Centerdata. It is advised that the codes meet the following rules:

- Are non-sequential (and have a reasonably large gap between each number).
- Include at least 6 digits. Including 7 or 8 digits would be more secure. However, it is also important to ensure that the chosen codes do not make it too challenging for people to enter the survey.
- May also include letters as well as numbers. If using letters, take care not to include letters that can be easily mistaken for numbers/other letters – e.g., thinking a zero (0) is an O, or not being sure whether a symbol is an L, an I, or a 1.

A source (English) version of the Round 11 paper self-completion questionnaire is being prepared by ESS HQ, working with a designer. This will also be shared with NC teams in February, for reference; however, the Centerdata system will be set up to produce a paper template automatically in each language once translations have been entered. The paper questionnaire will be in InDesign software. NC teams therefore need to ensure they have access to InDesign, which will allow them to make any minor adaptations to the layout that are required (e.g., if questions need to move between pages following the addition of translations). If teams need guidelines on how to use the software, ESS HQ can help (please contact via email at ess@city.ac.uk). NCs should also consider any possible issues relating to providing a written version of the questionnaire compared to a face-to-face version (with questions read by interviewers). Issues related to gendered languages or how to convert questions from a spoken to a written form should be planned early. NCs are responsible for ensuring the final signoff of the paper questionnaire(s).

Translations

Countries will use their Round 11 translations which have been prepared for the face-to-face survey. These will need to be amended slightly. In most countries this will be a simple and quick process.

As noted above, national teams will be responsible for inserting translations into Centerdata's TranslationCTRL system. Translation adaptation instructions for both web and paper versions will be provided by ESS HQ via a copy of the face-to-face source questionnaire with changes tracked.

In some countries, there will be a need to provide instruments in multiple languages. This is easily achieved in the Centerdata TranslationCTRL system, with translations entered in one specific space for each language version and then imported back into the web questionnaire programme: different languages can be programmed, and the respondent can choose their language from the landing page / at the start of the web survey.

For the paper questionnaire, different versions will need to be created for different languages. The approach for sending different language versions of the questionnaire to sample units will need to be determined by each country. For example, where there is a 'main' language that most people read, it may make sense to send questionnaires in only this language, with other language versions available on request. However, if there are two more 'equal' languages (with different groups speaking/reading each one), it may be necessary to send both language versions. Alternatively, this could be organised by PSU if it is known which areas will need particular questionnaires. This approach will need to be determined by each country.

Data collection

There are two broad options for the self-completion data collection approach. These are introduced here and described in more detail in the following sections:

1. Postal recruitment only – all contact with sample units is through postal invitations and reminders (reminders but not initial invitations can include telephone reminders), with no need for fieldworkers to visit sample units physically at any stage. This is the recommended approach for the majority of countries.
2. Fieldworker-assisted data collection – fieldworkers are needed to hand-deliver letters and paper questionnaires. This approach is required in countries where sample frames are unsuitable for addressing postal invitations, where there is clear evidence that the postal system is highly unreliable, or where it is not possible to send unconditional incentives by post.

The ESS self-completion approach for Round 10 was designed with a recommendation for countries to take a sequential (web > paper) approach to data collection. This means that sample units are initially invited to participate online, with paper questionnaires only being offered to non-responders with later reminders. Most evidence suggests that similar response rates are achieved between this approach and a concurrent approach (where web and paper are both offered from the start)³. Furthermore, maximising the proportion of web returns offers benefits in terms of data quality and reduced costs. For Round 11 testing, the decision to use a sequential (web > paper) or concurrent (web + paper) approach is with the national teams, who are best placed to judge the success of sequential vs. concurrent approaches in their national contexts. (Please discuss your approach and rationale with ESS HQ.)

Postal recruitment only

Initial evidence from ESS Round 10 (carried out via postal-only self-completion in nine countries in 2021/2022), a 3-country push-to-web test study (carried out by the ESS in Austria, Hungary and Serbia⁴ in late 2020), a 1-country push-to-web incentive and length experiment (carried out by the ESS in Austria in spring 2021), and parallel runs in two countries (GB and Finland in 2021-22) suggests that reasonable response rates can be achieved using postal recruitment only, including in countries without named person samples. 7 of the 10 countries that used the near-full ESS questionnaire and postal recruitment for their R10 data collection or parallel runs achieved response rates between 30% and 40%. A further two achieved response rates between 20% and 30%, with one achieving a response rate below 20%. This evidence suggests that a push-to-web approach based exclusively on postal recruitment may be suitable for many ESS countries⁵. This will also allow sample sizes to be maximised (removing the need for fieldworker costs) and help to minimise the length of the data collection phase.

³ Biemer, P. P., Murphy, J., Zimmer, S., Berry, C., Deng, G., & Lewis, K. (2018). Using Bonus Monetary Incentives to Encourage Web Response in Mixed-Mode Household Surveys. *Journal of Survey Statistics and Methodology*, 6(2), 240–261. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jssam/smx015>.

Mauz, E., von der Lippe, E., Allen, J., Schilling, R., Müters, S., Hoebel, J., Schmich, P., Wetzstein, M., Kamtsiuris, P., & Lange, C. (2018). Mixing modes in a population-based interview survey: Comparison of a sequential and a concurrent mixed-mode design for public health research. *Archives of Public Health*, 76(1), 1– 17. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13690-017-0237-1>.

Suzer-Gurtekin, Z. T., Elkasabi, M., Lepkowski, J. M., Liu, M., & Curtin, R. (2019). Randomized Experiments for Web-Mail Surveys Conducted Using Address-Based Samples of the General Population. In *Experimental Methods in Survey Research* (pp. 275–289). Wiley. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119083771.ch14>.

⁴ The questionnaire used for this was around a third of the full ESS questionnaire. Postal invitations were sent to gross samples of 1,000 sample units in each country. Sample units were sent an invitation letter and two reminders, with the paper questionnaire sent with the final reminder. Data collection was carried out in late 2020.

⁵ Evidence also suggests that a long (50 minute) questionnaire is feasible via push-to-web methods.

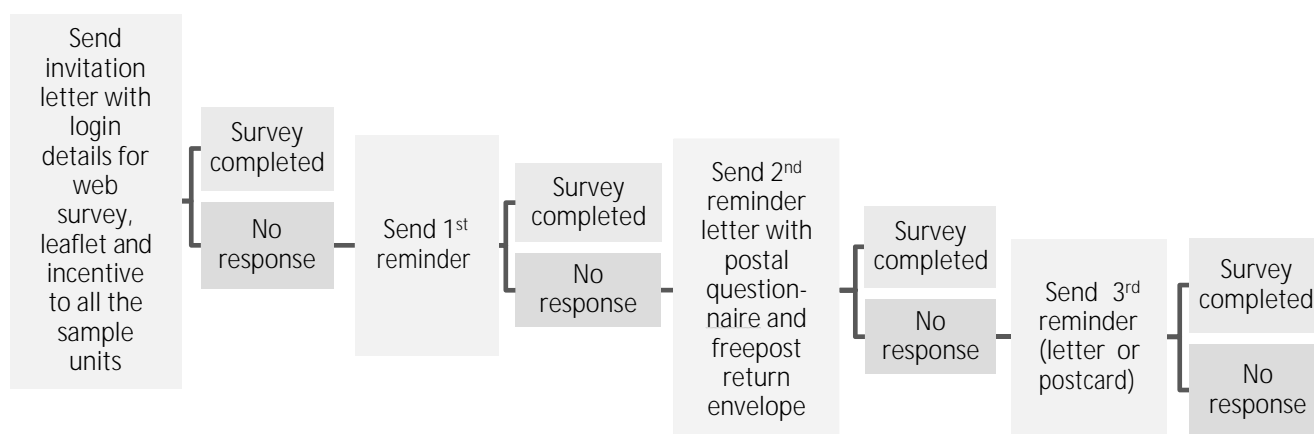
For countries using this approach we recommend that four mailings are sent to sample units (as in ESS Round 10).

The invitation letter should include the link to the web survey and login details. This information should also be included in all reminder letters or other communications. After the invitation letter, three reminders should be sent to the non-responding sample units, reflecting as closely as possible the following guidelines:

- The first reminder should arrive 7 days⁶ after the first invitation.
- The second reminder should arrive 14 days after the first reminder, with the paper questionnaire included in the envelope (and a freepost return envelope provided) if a sequential web>paper approach is being used.
- A final reminder should be received approximately 14 days after the second reminder.

All reminders should only be sent to non-responders who have not opted out; you will therefore need a system to monitor completions and remove sample units from mailings where relevant (information on completions will be available in Centerdata's platform).

Figure 1. Proposed mailing approach: postal recruitment only.



It is important to ensure that different envelopes are used at each stage. By providing different sizes / colours of envelope it suggests to the respondent that this is something different and makes them more likely to be opened; postcards can also be considered as long as web log in details are hidden behind scratch off paper. NCs are advised to avoid using materials which make the mailing look like a commercial marketing exercise (e.g., very bright colours). If there are different categories of postage or different providers available in the country, we strongly recommend to select the option expected to be most reliable to maximise the chances of letters being delivered to sample units (i.e. services with very recognisable envelopes that might be associated to advertising should be avoided). (For the purposes of self-completion feasibility tests, it would be useful to explore postal services that offer mail tracking, at least for the first invitation letter, to determine whether mailings are arriving at the intended household. This may be especially useful in countries with concerns about the reliability of the postal system.) In countries where an individual sample is available, the invitation letters and reminders should be personalised with the respondent's name. Where not available this should be 'To the Resident / Occupier'.

The paper questionnaire should be sent with a freepost return envelope addressed to the research

⁶ Dillman, D.A., Smyth, J.D., & Christian L.M. (2014). Internet, phone, mail and mixed-mode surveys: The Tailored Design Method. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Evidence from ESS experiments and Round 10 suggests the high efficacy of the first reminder when received 7 days after the first invitation.

institute or fieldwork agency. Returns should be collected, recorded and checked for completeness on a daily basis. Where letters are returned as non-delivered, this should also be documented alongside any reasons for non-delivery. When paper questionnaires are received, they should be logged into the Centerdata platform noting the date they arrive by post, as this information will be required as part of the final dataset.

ESS HQ also highly recommends every country adopting the “postal recruitment only” approach to plan a soft launch, issuing approx. 200 sample units 14 days before contacting the rest of the gross sample. This will allow a final check to the web survey setup and mail delivery, with the possibility to delay the main launch if any issues are detected.

Fieldworker-assisted data collection

For any countries where it is unfeasible to send postal invitations (due to lack of suitable sample frames or unreliability of postal systems), fieldworkers will be needed to hand-deliver the four mailings (invitation letter and three reminders). However, NCs are advised to fully investigate mailing options before adopting this approach – for example, whether there are different categories of postage or different providers that are more reliable (even if they are more expensive).

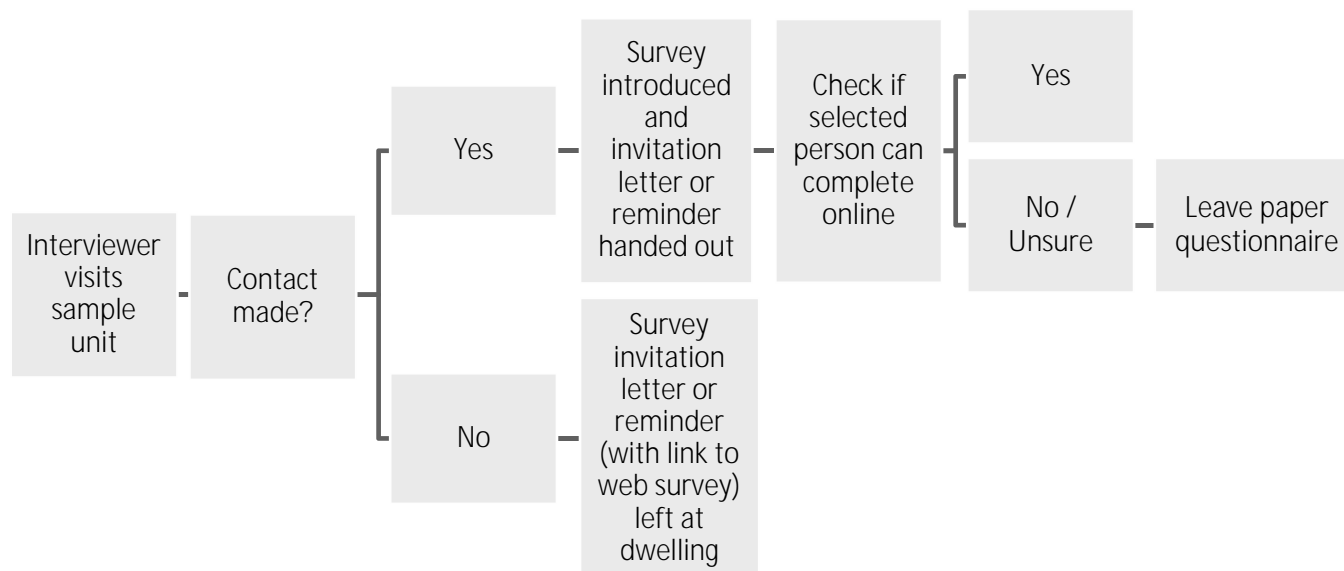
Countries that determine that fieldworkers are needed to hand-deliver letters should adhere to the following procedures.

- **Invitation letter** – Fieldworkers will make contact at sample units to hand-deliver the invitation letters and introduce the survey. This personal contact may help to maximise response to the survey. As a result, visits to addresses (especially for the invitation letter) should be made at times when people are most likely to be at home. Fieldworkers should also be provided with copies of the ESS11 paper questionnaire to be handed to respondents if they communicate not being able to complete the survey online⁷. In addition, fieldworkers should also try to collect contact information (e.g., telephone number) to be used for reminders.
- **Non-contact** – If there is no answer at the sample unit, the survey invitation letter should be left at the dwelling. Where it might not be feasible to leave the letter (e.g., locked gates, no post-box, gatekeepers), fieldworkers should make repeat visits.
- **Reminders** – Fieldworkers will repeat the contact procedure used for the invitation letter to deliver up to three reminders to non-responders. These reminders should be delivered to sample units with the following intervals:
 - The first reminder 7 days after the first invitation.
 - The second reminder 14 days after the first reminder, with the paper questionnaire included in the envelope (if not already provided).
 - A final reminder (possibly a postcard) should be received approximately 14 days after the second reminder.
- **Collecting the paper questionnaire** – Fieldworkers will be also required to collect the paper questionnaire after its completion. This should be attempted at every visit after the questionnaire is delivered. There should then be a further visit to non-respondents around 14 days after the final reminder is delivered. Fieldworkers should also make telephone contact with non-responders in advance of visits, to maximise the chances of being able to collect completed questionnaires when they do visit. In cases where there are no concerns with the reliability of

⁷ Countries implementing the “fieldworker-assisted data collection” approach might also consider adopting a concurrent approach (instead of the proposed sequential approach), with fieldworkers delivering both the invitation letter with the link to the web survey and the paper questionnaire at the at the same time, even when the latter is not directly requested by the respondents. This might be an effective way to reduce the fieldworkers’ workloads (and the related costs), as providing both the web and the paper option will maximise the opportunity of response and this might reduce the number of visits required.

the postal system, a freepost return envelope can be left with the postal questionnaire. If this is done, fieldworkers will need to be informed when questionnaires are returned to avoid any unnecessary visits.

Figure 2. Proposed contact approach with fieldworkers (to be repeated at every visit).



Countries implementing the fieldworker-assisted data collection approach are required to run a pre-test with a small sample (minimum of 50 sample units issued) to assess the feasibility of the approach in their own country-specific survey environment. The pre-test should include at least two of the four visits planned for the main stage. Intervals between visits can also be shortened to minimise the length of the pre-test period.

A system will need to be established for communicating with fieldworkers when sample units have completed the survey online (and possibly for when paper questionnaires have been received). This will avoid any unnecessary visits to sample units that have already completed the survey. Fieldworkers will also be required to collect data on the outcome of each visit to the sample units. The CST will provide a minimal contact form template to record this information.

Where possible, it may be efficient to combine the fieldworker-assisted self-completion approach with the face-to-face Round 11 fieldwork. ESS interviewers conducting face-to-face visits for Round 11 could also be asked to visit a (previously agreed) neighbouring address after completing the face-to-face visit, for the purpose of delivering the self-completion invitation letter. ESS HQ can advise further on such an approach.

Invitation letters and reminders

ESS HQ will provide source versions of survey invitation and reminder letters. These will need to be translated by national teams. The wording may also need to be adapted depending on the approach you are taking in your country (for example, incentives or whether fieldworkers are being used). However, other changes should be discussed with ESS HQ (ess@city.ac.uk)⁸, as we know that this wording has worked well in at least a dozen ESS countries. You also need to consider if the invitation

⁸ Ideally, changes are not advised by the CST, except for GDPR reasons (in case of different eligible population, i.e., all persons aged 18 and over instead persons aged 15 and over, or of any other country-specific requirement). or response rate enhancement strategies (e.g., adding QR codes to facilitate the access to the web survey). These cases need to be discussed with the Country Contact and ESS HQ.

needs to be provided in more than one language and if so when / how this will be delivered (e.g., double-sided letter).

An updated version of the Data Protection Information Sheet, (to be provided by ESS HQ, but which may require national level adaptation) also needs to be sent with the invitation letter (or provided at the first contact with sample units). Please note that the Data Protection Information Sheet must be produced as per the source version delivered by the CST (and translated into relevant target languages) and given to potential respondents before gathering data. All information provided in the sheet must be included in the version used in each country.

Respondent selection

Where a dwelling or address sample is used, one person aged 15 or over in the household should be randomly selected for interview. The survey invitation will ask the person aged 15 or over with the next birthday in the household to complete the survey. This information will be made very prominent in the letter, with a further check that the correct person is completing the survey at the start of the questionnaire. The questionnaire will also ask for the year and month of birth of each household member, to allow this selection to be validated (noting this will not be possible in cases where two or more dwelling members have a birthday in the same month).

In the case of an address or named person sample a question will be added at the start of the survey in countries where those under 18 are considered minors. The question will ask those considered to be minors under national ethics rules to confirm that their parent or Guardian consents to them taking part. Only by confirming consent will they be able to proceed. This is also mentioned in the invitation and reminder letters.

Cases where the incorrect respondents have completed the survey or where it is not possible to determine this (i.e., missing answers to the validation questions) will be included in the published data, but may be highlighted with a specific variable.

Incentives

Incentives are seen as essential when conducting self-completion surveys. We strongly recommend that you offer a combination of an unconditional and conditional incentives.

When using postal recruitment only, an unconditional monetary incentive is **mandatory**, and a conditional incentive is strongly recommended. When using fieldworker-assisted recruitment, both unconditional and conditional incentives are strongly recommended.

The unconditional incentive should be sent with the invitation letter or handed out by the fieldworker on first visit/contact. The conditional incentive should be sent (either electronically or via the post) to those who have completed the survey.

The incentive amounts should be determined by each country, depending on the available budget and the relative value of different amounts (e.g., in some countries a €5 incentive will be worth more than in others). If it is not possible to use any monetary incentives (cash or vouchers) then countries **must** use fieldworkers instead, as a postal-only approach without incentives is likely to deliver very low response rates.

It is likely you will need to use quite a small unconditional incentive (we recommend €5 in countries with a GDP per capita similar to Austria) given the relatively low response rate expected in most countries (therefore needing quite a large gross sample). However, this unconditional offering is still felt to be essential in motivating target respondents to complete the survey and is therefore mandatory. The conditional incentive should be larger given it will only be paid to those who complete the survey.

However, with an ESS survey likely to be long (possibly 50+ minutes) it is really seen as beneficial to offer this too.

Where possible, we recommend that cash rather than voucher incentives are offered especially for the unconditional incentive⁹. Consideration of the ethical implications behind specific vouchers / suppliers should also be made. In particular, it is important to avoid vouchers that can only be used at stores that are not well spread across the country.

Response Rate Enhancement

Countries testing a self-completion approach alongside Round 11 are encouraged to consider the implementation of different response rate enhancement strategies. These were found to be beneficial during self-completion data collection ESS Round 10. Two possible approaches are described below. Countries should review all options and form a response maximization plan if possible, discussing these plans with ESS HQ.

Telephone reminders

If you use a named person sample and have access to phone numbers for most target respondents, you can also use telephone reminders to help maximise response rates but only in combination with written requests to participate being delivered on paper to the target addresses first (following the mailing schedule set out earlier). Similarly, reminders calls can be also planned in countries that will use fieldworkers to deliver the mailings, for cases where contact information is collected.

Follow-up visits to non-responders

All countries should also seriously consider using fieldworkers to make follow-up visits to encourage non-responders to complete the survey (and leave written communication if no response). In particular, fieldworkers could be used for a non-response “mop-up¹⁰” phase (either on its own or in combination with earlier fieldworker visits). This is likely to help maximise response and would be of methodological interest to the ESS ERIC.

Note that this would still involve visiting the majority of sample units, given in most cases we would expect response rates somewhat below 40%, although it might be possible to select a sub sample at which to test this. As a result, the NCs should carefully consider the expected cost-benefit trade-offs of this compared with other possible response maximisation strategies.

Helpline

Regardless of the approach used, a helpline for respondents must be provided throughout the fieldwork period. This should include an e-mail address (with an out of office message out of working hours) as well as a telephone number (with an answer phone for out of hours). Some weekend cover should be offered especially at key stages of anticipated response.

Specifying approach and progress updates

All national teams that plan to adopt the self-completion approach need to complete a short methodological questionnaire to specify their national approach. A template for this will be provided by the CST. Your approach needs to be signed-off by the CST in advance of data collection.

⁹ Erica Ryu, Mick P. Couper, Robert W. Marans, Survey Incentives: Cash vs. In-Kind; Face-to-Face vs. Mail; Response Rate vs. Nonresponse Error, *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, Volume 18, Issue 1, Spring 2006, Pages 89–106, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ijpor/edh089>.

¹⁰ In the sense of approaching the remaining unresponsive cases and converting them into completes.

During the data collection, monitoring will be possible through the Centerdata SurveyCTRL platform. It will be important for teams to keep this platform up-to-date with the information that must be manually entered (e.g., paper questionnaire returns, letter mailing dates, etc.)

At the end of the data collection phase, you will be required to complete a technical summary of your approach. This will include information on your approach (e.g., contact with the help line), achieved response and key timings (e.g., data collection start/end dates and mailing dates). Further details and a template will be supplied at a later date.

Data processing

ESS HQ will update the Round 11 data protocol to reflect the changes made for self-completion and share the revised version with countries in advance of the data collection period. National teams will need to deliver data according to this specification. A single data file is required – including responses to the web and paper questionnaire – so you will need to merge data from both modes. Centerdata will provide SPSS syntax for producing a datafile in line with the self-completion protocol.

National teams will input data from the paper questionnaires into the central questionnaire platform provided by Centerdata. This follows a similar approach to what was done in ESS Round 10, where most national teams decided to enter the data for the postal cases directly into a copy of the web questionnaire (while ensuring these were clearly logged as cases where respondents had completed the paper questionnaire). If responses from paper questionnaires are manually entered, we strongly recommend that the data is checked by a second person (comparing back to the paper questionnaire) to minimise the risk of errors. Please also note that the deposited data files must not include any para-data harvested by the web-survey (such as IP address) of which the respondents have not been informed about.

Data from self-completion testing at Round 11 will not form part of countries' ESS Round 11 data. This testing stage is considered a separate project to gain information about the self-completion process in a wider variety of countries.

In addition to the main dataset, some specific fieldwork data will be required (e.g., where fieldworkers are used, they may need to record contact data in a similar way to the face-to-face survey). Detailed information on these data will be provided by ESS HQ.

The retention time of any personal data related to the self-completion data collection (e.g., paper questionnaires) will be agreed between the NC Team and the ESS DPO and explicitly mentioned in the Data Processing Agreement.

Timetable

High-level timings for the Round 11 self-completion approach are as follows:

- Web and paper source questionnaires available from ESS HQ (February 2023)
- Centerdata's TranslationCTRL platform available for national teams to input translations for web and paper (March 2023)
- National teams review country-specific, translated questionnaires and set up their samples in Centerdata's SurveyCTRL platform (from March/April 2023)
- Self-completion data collection (from April 2023)

Variation in approaches

It is expected that all countries using the self-completion approach for ESS mainstage fieldwork will follow the requirements set out in this protocol. Thus, to make self-completion tests at Round 11 as

helpful as possible, it is ideal to test the self-completion approach as closely as possible to how it will eventually be fielded in the ESS. While certain elements may be seen as imperfect in some countries, it is crucial that we ensure as much consistency as possible between countries to produce robust cross-national data. However, at this provisional testing stage deviations are acceptable. If there are particular reasons why any parts of the protocol are not possible to implement in your country, please raise this with ESS HQ as early as possible.