

**European Governance and Public
Finance**

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Invitation to Tender

Fieldwork for the ESS round 12 in Austria

Closing time and date for receipt of tenders:
12 noon on 25th April 2025

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1 Introduction and Background

The European Social Survey (ESS) is an academically-led biennial cross-national general social survey. From 2013 onwards, the ESS was established as a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ESS ERIC), a legal entity formed by its participating member countries. The ESS ERIC has a General Assembly, which is the ultimate decision-making organ of the infrastructure. Each country is represented on the GA by a representing entity. The statutes for ESS ERIC can be found [here](#). The GA appoints a Director who is charged with ensuring the effective direction and operation of the research infrastructure. The current Director is Professor Rory Fitzgerald and the Deputy Director HQ is Dr Eric Harrison. The ESS HQ is at City St George's, University of London, UK.

The survey aims to chart stability and change in the social fabric of Europe as well as developing and utilising the highest standards in cross-national research. The core of ESS operations are the conduct of an hour-long face-to-face survey every two years amongst a representative sample of the general residential population aged 15 and older in 30 or more participating European countries (plus Israel). It is therefore a repeat cross-sectional cross-national general survey. Further details about the ESS can be found at www.europeansocialsurvey.org.

The ESS National Coordinator for Austria/Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS) acting in the name of and on behalf of ESS ERIC seeks to commission the fieldwork for ESS round 12 in Austria. This document sets out the requirements for the provision of:

- Research fieldwork services to conduct the ESS round 12 in Austria

This Invitation to Tender is made available under the Open Procedure of the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and a Notice of this opportunity was submitted to the Official Journal of the European Union on 26.03.2025.

2 Proposed Approach

The ESS National Coordinator for Austria/HIS acting in the name of and on behalf of ESS ERIC, wishes to commission the ESS Round 12 fieldwork in Austria.

The fieldwork organization must follow the “Round 12 Survey Specification for ESS ERIC Member, Observer and Guest Countries” as amended from time to time, which will also be part of the contract. These tasks include, but are not limited to:

- Programming the translated questionnaire and contact forms into CAPI.

- Propose an appropriate sampling design together with the NC and the ESS. Sampling Experts Panel adhering to the sampling specifications (see appendix 4).
- Interviewer briefing jointly with the NC.
- Conducting the face-to-face interviews with CAPI in the German language. (The design effect from ESS round 11 amounts to 1.6, the fieldwork organization has to ensure an effective sample size of 800).
- Adhering to the rules regarding the form and number of contact attempts as stated in the “Round 12 Survey Specification for ESS ERIC Member, Observer and Guest Countries” (see appendix 3).
- Continually reporting on the fieldwork progress on a case-level basis, whereas the details will be defined by the National coordinator.
- Providing data for other required documents, e.g. fieldwork questionnaire, national technical summary, etc.
- Data processing of the education, occupation, economic activities and country of birth variables.

The fieldwork organization to be appointed has to have the following expertise and resources available:

- A sufficient number of interviewers fluent in the German language.
- The technical equipment for CAPI.
- A dense network of interviewers in order to conduct F2F-interviews throughout Austria.
- The ability to conduct all the required interviews within a 5-month period between 01. September 2025 to 15. May 2026, whereas the fieldwork is planned to start on 01. September 2025.

3 Application

Applications should contain the following sections and must be submitted in English (the working language of the ESS). All proposed personnel should be fluent in written and spoken English.

Section 1

Section 1 should outline the organisation of the project team and the expertise of the proposed individual(s) including a CV. Further, the tenderer should provide a minimum of two reference projects with relevant contact persons.

Section 2

We ask for a proposal of a sampling design based on strict probability sampling and adhering to the specifications outlined in the ESS 12 Sampling Guidelines. Please note that this proposal may not be the sampling design used for fieldwork. Final approval of the sampling design will be decided by the ESS Sampling Expert team.

Section 3

Applications should outline the approach proposed for the fieldwork as well as all the implemented measures and provisions to ensure meeting all the requirements set out in the “Round 12 Survey Specification for ESS ERIC Member, Observer and Guest Countries”, as well as securing adherence to the GDPR.

Section 4

A fully justified budget should be provided. Budgets of up to €315,000.00 excl. VAT can be considered but value for money should be demonstrated.

Proposals can be a maximum of 20 pages (CVs can be additional). Longer proposals will NOT be considered.

Proposals should be sent as a single PDF to tenders.ess@ihs.ac.at by 12 noon on 25.04.2025. Submitted tenders will be downloaded by the ESS National Coordinator for Austria Dr. Peter Grand.

Applicants may be invited to present to the selection committee in Vienna. The Award Decision and the Award Notice will be communicated in May 2025

The selection committee shall consist of:

Dr. Peter Grand,
Institute for Advanced Studies (National Coordinator)
Competence Center Survey Research

Dr. Marcel Fink
Institute for Advanced Studies (National Coordinator)

The successful applicant(s) should be available to start work from 01 May 2025. However, effective fieldwork is planned to start on 01. September 2025.

4 Criteria

Tenderers must show compliance with the following minimum requirements:

- a probability sample representative of the whole Austrian population over 15 years of age
- a minimum overall net sample size of approx. 1,280 successfully completed interviews (according to the required effective sample size of 800 Interviews and the design effect from ESS round 11 of 1.6).
- Sufficient number of experienced (F2F CAPI) interviewers to conduct F2F-interviews.
- Workload per interviewer is limited to 48 sample units.
- Accepting the ESS round 12 survey specifications as part of the contract.
- The Survey Agency will be asked to adhere to the Declaration on Ethics of the International Statistical Institute, in addition to any co-existing national obligations that they may have. The survey agency must also undertake to adhere to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and national laws.
- Survey agencies must also follow all instructions given by the data controller (ESS ERIC Director) and report any data breaches to ESS ERIC HQ and the Austrian National Coordinator (IHS) at once.
- The survey agency has to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). This means that procedures with regard to information given to the respondents, data handling agreements, transfer and protection will have to be adapted and harmonised. Note that ESS ERIC is the Data Controller (their function defined by the GDPR). Survey agencies are Data Processors. It will be necessary for each data processor to inform ESS ERIC HQ who the Data Protection Officer is (in cases where they are appointed). ESS ERIC HQ will provide harmonised wording regarding data protection and storage which must be presented (without alternation other than translation) to every ESS respondent. Consent is noted by the interview being conducted and written consent is not required. Each data processor will need to sign a data handling agreement with ESS ERIC.

Tasks of the Survey Agency include, but are not limited to, the following activities:

- programming the questionnaires and designing (and, where necessary, printing) other fieldwork materials (Contact Forms, showcards, etc.),
- testing routing and completeness of questionnaires,
- pre-testing the translated questionnaire(s),
- interviewer training, briefing, and monitoring,
- preparing and sending advance material (advance letters, brochures),
- sampling implementation (samples of individuals, households or addresses),
- developing and implementing measures to enhance response rates (e.g. incentives),
- data collection: conducting interviews, completing contact forms and interviewer questionnaires,
- monitoring interviewers' and fieldwork progress, and providing case level fieldwork progress information to the CST,
- cleaning and editing data files,
- coding and classifying data,
- (helping) prepare data files and documents

Compliance with these minimum requirements will be assessed. Offers deviating from the minimum requirements or not covering all the minimum requirements may be rejected on the basis of non-compliance and will not be evaluated further.

The quality of the tender will be evaluated based on the following criteria and their corresponding weightings. In their technical proposals, tenders must include all the information required by the contracting authority to evaluate their tenders, as described below.

Minimum content of the proposal

1) Project management

1.1) Work programme

The tenderers shall describe how they will meet the above outlined minimum requirements and provide a detailed work plan.

The tenderers shall describe measurements used and actions taken to increase response rates, refusal conversion rates and to decrease interviewer effects.

1.2) Organisation of the project team

The tenderers shall describe the composition of the fieldwork team and the experience of its members.

2) Project methodology

2.1) Sample design

The tenderers shall propose at least one sampling design which follows the ESS sampling rules. Strict probability sampling is a necessary prerequisite as well as covering the Austrian population 15+.

2.2) Survey implementation

The tenderers shall describe the technical infrastructure they will put in place for the survey implementation.

The tenderers shall describe how quality and field controls will be implemented.

The tenderers shall describe how they will store, handle, and process any personal and sensitive data and what measures will be applied to ensure their security and compliance with data protection rules (GDPR).

3) Price

A fully justified budget should be provided. Budgets of up to € 315,000.00 excl. VAT can be considered but value for money should be demonstrated. Costs must be presented in an understandable and transparent way differentiated according to the respective tasks. Further, the proposed budget should present the costs for the above-mentioned minimum requirements but also for measures to improve response rates, e.g. the costs for every +100 interviews.

5 Award Criteria

The criteria and the respective weighting for the Austrian ESS NC/IHS acting in the name of and on behalf of ESS ERIC in choosing the successful tender(s) are:

- | | | |
|----|---|-----|
| 1. | Experience of the applicant(s) | 40% |
| 2. | Ability to meet the specification | 40% |
| 3. | Costs (within budget as defined in Section 6) and well specified | 20% |

Tenderers should ensure that their bid demonstrates ability and compliance in each of these areas as well as highlighting value added. The successful tenderer will subsequently be required to provide details of its insurance policy in relation to all aspects of cover, including public liability. Your tender should be written to demonstrate your firm's ability to meet the above criteria.

Each application will be scored on each criterion (3 – fully met and added value, 2 – Fully met, 1 – partially met, 0 – Criteria not met). Applications demonstrating added value beyond the specified details but within the budget available will be especially welcomed.

6 Budget and Reporting

The Austrian ESS NC/IHS anticipates that the budget for the Work Package to include all costs, is likely to fall within the guideline range of up to €315,000.00 excl. VAT. Please note that the budget should be specified in Euro and payments to the contractor will be in Euro.

7 Potential Business Available

The request for a proposal within this process may or may not result in a contract being awarded, the Austrian ESS NC/IHS does not commit to entering a contract or commitment of any kind as a result of this process, commitment will only be by way of issue of a formal Austrian ESS NC/IHS purchase order.

8 Contract Duration and Scope

It is planned that the appointment will be made in May 2025; the fieldwork has to take place between 01. September 2025 and 15. May 2026. Whereas most probably fieldwork will start on 01. September 2025 and should be finished within five months.

9 Terms and Conditions

Any contract(s) resulting from this Invitation to Tender will be subject to the General Terms and Conditions of Contract available from IHS ESS website: <http://www.ihs.ac.at/ess>. The preferred bidder(s) may be asked to submit further corporate information appropriate to the business in hand.

10 Clarifications

All queries must be submitted to the IHS (tenders.ess@ihs.ac.at) by 12 noon Austrian time on 30. September 2022.

Clarifications (unless of a purely administrative or trivial nature) will be anonymised and made available via the IHS ESS website (procurement page) to all interested firms.

11 Submission of Tenders

Tenders must be submitted to the IHS . Tenders must be received no later than:

(Austrian time). 12:00 noon on 25th April 2025

The tender will close at that time and late submissions will not be possible.

In the event of any problems, please contact IHS:

Dr. Peter Grand +43159991-288, Email: grand@ihs.ac.at

12 Decision process / Next steps

The tenders will be considered by the IHS ESS National Coordinator and a decision is likely to be taken within three weeks of the closing date for the tender. The IHS may invite firms to present/discuss the proposals, as appropriate.

13 Schedule of pricing

Please submit your firm's quotation for the work in euros as follows:

ITEM	€
Fieldwork European Social Survey Round 12 in Austria	

Please state any assumptions or exclusions that you have made in your pricing proposal.

14 References and CVs

Please provide two referees whom we can contact to obtain references for similar type, size and scope of work undertaken, ideally at least one Institution of Higher Education. The contact details must include a telephone number and an email address.

Please provide the curriculum vitae of the key personnel whom you would plan to deploy to this contract (as a guide, two-three pages maximum for each key member of staff). These should indicate their expertise and willingness to participate in the panel and the Work Package activities. You should also provide your procedure for knowledge transfer within your organisation in the event of a key member of staff leaving your firm.

15 Intellectual Property

All work commissioned by IHS under this agreement shall be the property of the European Social Survey ERIC.

The intellectual property (including, but not limited to, copyright, trade-marks and patents) and any derivative intellectual property in work carried out by the appointed firm shall transfer to the ESS ERIC on delivery.

The ESS ERIC shall be at liberty to update such work as its needs dictate.

16 Tender submission (proposal)

Your submission (in your firm's standard format) must include, as a minimum:

- a) A statement of how the service is to be delivered, managed and quality assured, in particular identifying where your firm has delivered similar services for (ideally) an Institution of Higher Education;

- b) Statement(s) / Case study (or studies) demonstrating successful delivery of similar work;
- c) Statement outlining the day-to-day methodology to be adopted as a modus operandi between ESS ERIC and your firm;
- d) A schedule of pricing (as stated above);
- e) References (as stated above);
- f) Completed, signed Form of Tender and Statement of Non-Collusion (form attached within this document);
- g) Completed, signed self-declaration form and tenderer identification form;
- h) Audited accounts for your firm's most recent financial year;
- i) Commercial Register Report
- j) Evidence of professional indemnity cover.

17 Timetable

It is planned that the following timetable will apply; but some dates may be subject to change during the procurement/tendering process:

Date	Event
26 th March 2025	Notice to be issued to the <i>Official Journal of the European Union</i> ; and Issue date of the Invitation to Tender
12 noon (Austrian time) on 09 th April 2025	Deadline for requests for Clarifications. (Clarifications (unless of a purely administrative or trivial nature) will be anonymised, sent to all firms invited to tender and deployed as an update on the ESS website – https://www.ihs.ac.at/ess/procurement/ as soon as practical after this time.)
12 noon (Austrian time) on 25 th April 2025	Deadline for submission of tenders via tenders.ess@ihs.ac.at (electronic submission only – no hard copies are required)
28 th April 2025	Award Decision
10 day period from Award Decision	'Standstill' period
08 th May 2025	Award Notice to be issued
01 st June 2025	Contract start date

Appendix 1: Form of Tender and Statement of Non-Collusion

Form of tender

We confirm that our Tender submission is fully compliant with this Invitation to Tender. We accept that our Tender may form part of any contract if successful.

Statement of non-collusion

The essence of selective tendering for any contract is that IHS shall receive *bona fide* competitive Tenders from all Tenderers.

In recognition of this principle, we certify that this is a *bona fide* offer, intended to be competitive and that we have not fixed or adjusted the amount of the offer in accordance with any agreement or arrangement with any other person (except any sub-contractor identified in this offer).

We also certify that we have not done and undertake that we will not do at any time any of the following acts:

- a) communicate to a person other than IHS, the amount or approximate amount of my/our proposed offer except where the disclosure in confidence of the approximate value of the Tender was essential to obtain insurance premium quotations required for the preparation of the Tender; or
- b) enter into any agreement or agreements with any other person that they shall refrain from tendering or as to the amount of any offer submitted by them; or
- c) offer or agree to pay or give or actually pay or give any sum of money, inducement or valuable consideration, directly or indirectly, to any person for doing or having done or having caused to be done in relation to this or any other offer or proposed offer, any act or omission.

We agree that IHS may, in its consideration of the offer and in any subsequent actions, rely upon this Statement.

Signed	Signature
Name	Name of signatory
In the capacity of (and authorised to sign this Form)	Job title
Tenderer	Name of firm
Date	Date