



International Social Survey Programme Ethical Statement

The International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) aims to collect high-quality comparative research data on issues of general sociopolitical interest. It adheres to established ethical guidelines and research standards, such as those outlined by the [Declaration of Helsinki](#) and the [Belmont Report](#). In line with these principles, the ISSP maintains the highest standards of ethical conduct in questionnaire design and in the collection, storage, and accessibility of data. Through this commitment, the ISSP strives to provide high-quality data that contribute to research and knowledge production, as well as to evidence-based policy and practice worldwide.

The ISSP source questionnaires are developed and pretested by international teams and discussed and formally approved by the General Assembly (GA), the main deliberative, decision-making, and representative body of the ISSP. The GA evaluates questions based on their scientific quality, cross-national comparability, and ethical appropriateness. The active involvement of all member states - each with equal voting rights - ensures that the source questionnaires are inclusive, culturally appropriate, and suitable for use across diverse social, political, and linguistic contexts. This collaborative process supports both substantive relevance and methodological rigour in the cross-national survey design. The Methodology Committee (MC) further provides expert guidance on methodological standards, questionnaire design, translation procedures, and data quality assurance.

The data collection of the ISSP must comply with the given legal and regulatory requirements in each respective ISSP member country. The ISSP safeguards the integrity of the survey process by ensuring objectivity, accuracy, and transparency. Data collection, processing, and reporting are conducted in a manner that prevents manipulation, misrepresentation, and conflicts of interest. Participants must be provided with clear and comprehensive information about the purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits of the study. Informed consent is obtained prior to participation, and participation is entirely voluntary. Respondents retain the right to refuse to answer specific questions and to withdraw at any point without penalty or explanation. Personal data are collected, processed and stored in compliance with national and/or EU data protection laws and regulations. Appropriate technical and organisational measures are implemented to ensure data security, confidentiality, and protection against unauthorised access, loss, or misuse. Before depositing data to the Archive at GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, ISSP data are anonymised so that individual survey participants cannot be identified. ISSP data are made available for academic research and teaching purposes. Access is provided free of charge under clear data-use conditions that protect respondent confidentiality and prevents attempts at re-identification.

The GESIS Archive collaborates closely with the MC and the Standing Committee (SC) to integrate the national surveys from each ISSP round into a harmonised and comprehensively documented international dataset. Through this collaborative efforts ISSP working principles are followed and standards for data formats, collection procedures, documentation, and the submission of national datasets are upheld.