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TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS DOCUMENT

OPEN PROCEDURE

Contract number CONTR-105/2023

Services for conducting a multinational survey (4 European countries)

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0. BACKGROUND

The UAB (Autonomous University of Barcelona) is hosting the research project "*A network science approach to social cohesion in European societies*" (acronym PATCHWORK; <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101020038>), which is being carried out between 2021 and 2026. The project is led by Dr. Miranda Lubbers and funded by the European Research Council. As part of this project, a transnational survey will be conducted with citizens from four European countries regarding their social relationships and social cohesion, which is the subject of this tender. The UAB team will statistically analyze the data from this survey and use it for the simulation of social networks at the societal level, as well as for agent-based modeling to gain a more precise understanding of the theoretical mechanisms.

1. OBJECT OF THE TENDER

The purpose of this contract is to conduct a survey on a representative sample of adult individuals from each of four European countries (Hungary, Netherlands, Poland, Sweden), with a total of 6,000 (six thousand) completed interviews, 1,500 (one thousand five hundred) per country. The survey will, therefore, be multinational and multilingual.

The theme of the survey is social cohesion and social relationships with individuals from different social groups. Among other questions, each respondent is asked how many people they know with different names (which helps estimate the size of their "personal network") and in different social groups. A personalized list is created during the interview for each respondent, containing a selection of known names and positions, to ask questions about the type of relationship with these individuals, their characteristics, and the relationships among them. Personal characteristics, opinions, and attitudes toward other social groups are also asked. The UAB team has developed the methodology, questionnaire, and complementary documents (information sheet, consent form, survey cards) and has conducted a face-to-face pretest in Spain with 50 respondents.

The administration of the questionnaire has an expected duration of 60 minutes (including the process of informing and instructing respondents, the consent procedure and compensation), but in case of using online methods of data collection, the bidder can propose to divide the interview in two sessions. In this case, it will be the UAB team that divides the content of the questionnaire into two parts. Furthermore, in this case, the sample of the first part must be large enough to compensate for realistic dropout rates, counting as "completed interviews" (1,500) only the interviews with both parts completed. The two parts must be linked at an individual level (per respondent) in the database.

Bids are expected to detail and justify the proposed data collection methodology, for example face-to-face interviews with CAPI (Computer-assisted personal interviewing), videoconference interviews with CAVI (Computer-assisted video interviewing), or web surveys, as well as quality control and monitoring measures and the software used. Bids must meet the following criteria: (1) the methodology must use probabilistic and representative samples of the adult population of each country (with over-representation of immigrants in the event that their percentage of the adult population in that country is less than 16.67%), (2) it must have a total number of completed survey interviews of 1,500 per country, totaling 6,000 (six thousand); (3) it must use methods that are maximally comparable across countries; and (4) it must adopt the highest standards of data quality control and monitoring measures. The survey can be launched in all four countries simultaneously or one after the other, but the fieldwork must be completed within 6 months.

2. BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE CONTRACT

- Title of the work: Conducting a multinational survey for the research project PATCHWORK on social relationships and social cohesion, 2024
- Entity commissioning the work: Autonomous University of Barcelona
- Date of the work: 2024
- Frequency: one-time
- Survey methodology: preferably CAPI (computer-assisted personal interviewing), but variations on the methodology are permitted.
- Territorial scope: Four European countries: Hungary, Netherlands, Poland, Sweden (In well-justified cases for technical reasons, the bidder can propose to change Sweden for Denmark; the other three countries cannot be changed)

3. TECHNICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WORK

3.1. Population scope

The PATCHWORK survey is targeted at the adult population residing in 4 European countries (Hungary, Netherlands, Poland, Sweden), and is, therefore, multinational. (In well-justified cases for technical reasons, the bidder can propose to change Sweden for Denmark; the other three countries cannot be changed)

3.2. Sample design and selection

The total number of surveys to be conducted (effective achieved sample size) is 1,500 (one thousand five hundred) in each country, with a total of 6,000 (six thousand) across the 4 mentioned countries. The sample will be representative of the adult population of each country, unless the percentage of immigrants (individuals born in a different country than the country of the survey) in the population of the country is below 16.67%, in which case immigrants will be overrepresented, comprising 16.67% of the effective achieved sample from that country (i.e., 250 respondents). By a “representative” sample we mean that:

1. Individuals are selected by strict probability methods at every stage, such that all members of the target population have a non-zero probability of being sampled, and guarantee accurate coverage in terms of respondents’ geographical location, age, and gender.
2. Sample inclusion probabilities are known and, if they are not equal for all respondents, can be used to construct “design weights” (survey weights) necessary for subsequent statistical inference.

Apart from the potential overrepresentation of migrants, the sampling method must lead to comparable data across the four countries.

3.3. Survey method

The offer must detail and justify the survey mode, which must guarantee a high level of data quality and access to all potential survey respondents. In case of proposing computer-assisted personal interviews (CAPI) or computer-assisted video interviews (CAVI), survey cards designed by the UAB team will be used as visual aids for the respondents and for more private answering (allowing participants to respond a letter indicated on the response card for a specific response category, rather than the potentially sensitive response category itself). If survey cards are not feasible, at least an option for self-administration of specific questions with sensitive content must be given.

In case an interviewer is not present (physically or online), the software must have a user-friendly and visually attractive interface, and respondents must have the option to ask questions to the company before the interview starts.

3.4. Questionnaire and survey software

The questionnaire, designed by the UAB team, consists of questions that are structured into three blocks: (1) opinions and attitudes of trust, solidarity, and social cohesion; (2) intimate and non-intimate social relationships; (3) personal characteristics (e.g., education, occupation, religion, income). The questionnaire has to be implemented in survey software (for CAPI, CAVI, or web survey, according to the proposed survey mode).

3.5. Language of the interview

The survey is multilingual. The interviews will be conducted in the 4 official languages of the 4 countries in the survey.

3.6. Interview duration

The interview will have an approximate average duration of 60 minutes, including the survey introduction and excluding final remarks. If proposing online survey modes, the session can be split into two sessions of 30 minutes, making sure to increase the initial sample to compensate for expected attrition. In the case of proposing two sessions, it will be the UAB team that divides the content of the questionnaire into two parts, each of which needs to be completed within a session.

3.7 Measures of quality control and follow-up

A pilot test is carried out with at least 6 interviewees per country (24 in total) with different educational levels, before starting the fieldwork of the survey and under the same conditions as the survey. The purpose of this test is to verify the correct functioning of the software application supporting the interviews, fieldwork tracking and control systems, data file, question, and answer comprehension, and questionnaire administration time. Furthermore, the offer must detail the measures that will be employed to guarantee the high quality of the data.

4. SERVICES AND TASKS TO BE CARRIED OUT BY THE AWARDED COMPANY

4.1. Fieldwork preparation tasks

The required services are as follows:

- a. The **implementation of the questionnaire** already developed by the research team at the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB), led by Dr. Miranda Lubbers (IP), into a CAPI software application (software for "Computer-assisted personal interviews"), CAVI software ("Computer-assisted video interviews") or web survey according to the proposed survey mode that allows multilingual administration of the questionnaire. The software must be technically reliable and, in case of self-administration of the questionnaire, it must guarantee the accessibility of all potential survey respondents, independently of possible disability or differences in technical competence and technological access (alternatively, a different mode of data collection is proposed for groups with difficult access). The UAB research team will provide translations of the questionnaire into the 4 official languages of the 4 countries surveyed. Given the complex structure of the questionnaire (especially the block of questions about social network relations), the program must allow for advanced skip logic, question and response piping (especially for open-ended responses - names and positions - in subsequent questions and response categories), advanced constructed lists ([see example](#)), loop logic, randomization of question blocks, and detection of inconsistencies in responses. Additionally, it should allow for automatic capture of the interview's date, start time, and end time (to calculate the date and duration of each interview) and various response formats.
- b. Separately, a minimal database should be constructed for respondents who agree, at the end of the questionnaire, to be contacted again (this time by the UAB team) for a follow-up interview. This database only needs to store the respondent's numeric identifier (that identifies their responses in the data base) and their name, surname, and contact information ((mobile) phone number, email address, or if the respondent does not have an email address, their residential address). For GDPR compliance, these data will be recorded separately from the survey responses, only to be linked by the numeric ID.
- c. Where applicable, manage the necessary **permissions** to conduct the survey in the 4 countries.
- d. Sign a **data processing agreement** with the contractor, ensuring that data processing measures comply with the European GDPR and national legislation, following the template of the university's Data Protection Officer. The agreement will also detail the security measures for the interviewers.
- e. **Planning and organizing** the fieldwork process, including printing and distribution of survey cards, consent forms, and information sheets, in the case of face-to-face interviews. The awarded company will create a schedule to predict production.
- f. **Selection, hiring, and supervision of fieldwork teams**: coordinators, interviewers (if interviewers are involved in the data collection), and supervisors. The interviewing personnel must have previous experience and sufficient language proficiency in the survey languages.
- g. **Training of all interviewers (if interviewers are involved in the data collection)** for the correct administration of the questionnaire and associated procedures (sampling, providing information to respondents, obtaining informed consent, gratifications, data protection, interviewer safety).

- h. **Random sampling** of the adult population in each country (population of 18 years and older), with a final number of 1,500 (one thousand five hundred) respondents per country (total 6,000 [six thousand] respondents for the 4 countries). The sampling (e.g., multi-stage stratified sampling with random routes in the last stage) will be representative of the population of each country (see section 3.2) unless the percentage of migrants (i.e., individuals born in a different country than the surveyed country) in the country's population is less than 16.67%, in which case migrants will be overrepresented, comprising 16.67% of the effective achieved sample from that country (250 respondents). In all other aspects, the sampling method must be comparable across the four countries.
- i. **Conduct a survey pilot test** with 6 individuals in each country with different education levels before starting the fieldwork, conducted under the same conditions as the actual survey. Furthermore, 3 members of the UAB team will participate as test persons in one of the implemented survey languages. As this test aims to verify the correct functioning of the software application supporting the interviews, fieldwork tracking and control systems, data file, question, and answer comprehension, and questionnaire administration time, the interviews conducted during the test will not be included in the final dataset. At the end of the pilot test, the awarded company will deliver the database and verbatim responses of the valid interviews conducted and the total duration times and per-block duration times of the questionnaire, at least one week before the start of the fieldwork.

4.2. Fieldwork and data collection tasks

The required services in this phase are as follows:

- a. **Conducting the survey** in the sample, similarly in all four countries. Before conducting the interview, the interviewer or company must provide information about the study to the respondent (i.e., present the information on paper or screen [text prepared by the UAB team, translated into the 4 languages], and answer any questions the respondents may have), have the respondents sign the consent form on paper or screen (text provided by the UAB team), and collect this form. In exceptional cases, oral consent can be obtained, recorded in audio format, following the instructions of the UAB team. Individuals who do not give their consent cannot be interviewed.
- b. **Quality control monitoring** at all stages and tasks of the data collection process (in all countries) and database compilation (e.g., monitoring interviewers/interviews, calling or re-interviewing a percentage of respondents).
- c. **Ensuring the data protection** of the interviewees according to the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and national legislation, their exercise of research participant rights, and the safety of the interviewers.

4.3. Post-fieldwork tasks

- a. **Creating a database** in Excel and SPSS (.sav) format containing the survey responses. The task also includes recording, cleaning, and validation. Variables and responses are labeled as indicated by the questionnaire provided by the UAB team. In case an interviewer is present

during the session (or during one or two of the two sessions), the file will also contain a numeric interviewer identifier for each interview, to allow for interviewer effect analysis. If a part of the sample has been surveyed in a different mode to guarantee respondents' access, this must be indicated in the database. If the inclusion probabilities are not equal for all respondent, these probabilities (or the sample weights) are either included in this file or in a separate file. Additionally, a database with the raw data, on which no data cleansing activities have been performed, is required.

- b. The contact details (name, surname, mobile phone number -or if that is unavailable, landline-, e-mail address -or if that is unavailable, residential address) of individuals who have consented to participate in a follow-up, more conversational interview will be separated from the survey responses into another file and only linked to the database by a numeric ID. The UAB team will conduct those conversational follow-up interviews themselves.
- c. Securely **delivering the specified data and documents** to the project's Principal Investigator (Dr. Miranda Lubbers) before the indicated deadline.
- d. Preparing a **technical report** describing in detail:
 - The sampling procedure (e.g., stratification, clustering, etc.), sampling error.
 - Non-response rate and measures taken to address non-response of the survey's unit of observation. If the presence and handling of unit non-response during data collection requires it, guidelines how unit non-response should be taken into account when analyzing the collected data.
 - A list of data cleaning operations (if any) performed while transforming the "raw data" into the final database to be delivered.
 - Details of quality control conducted and their results and incidents.
 - Other relevant data.
- e. The company will only deliver the data to the project's Principal Investigator and will not use it themselves, nor will they deliver it to or share it with third parties.

4.4. Throughout the process

- a. Maintaining contact with the UAB team (the project's Principal Investigator) at key moments, e.g., to explain the questionnaire, resolve doubts about questionnaire skip logic, or, once the questionnaire has been implemented in the software, for the UAB team to check that it functions correctly, or to report on the survey's progress.

5. DATA AND DOCUMENTS TO BE DELIVERED

The data and documents to be delivered to the project's Principal Investigator before the established deadline are as follows:

- a. A printout from the survey software of the questionnaire as it is implemented in the software (e.g., screenshots), in PDF format as well as a list of implemented piping and routing instructions.
- b. A file with the **data from the survey pilot test** in Excel and SPSS formats, with the 24 anonymized responses and the verbatim responses of the open-ended questions from the valid interviews conducted, as well as the total duration times and per-block duration times of the questionnaire (this file will be delivered before the survey's fieldwork).
- c. The survey's **database** (see Section 4.3) **in Excel and SPSS** (.sav) formats with the responses of the 6,000 respondents, pseudonymized (i.e., without names, surnames, or contact details but with a unique numeric ID for each respondent) – both raw and cleaned.
- d. Separately, a **file** with the numeric ID, name, surname, and contact details of the individuals who have consented to participate in a follow-up interview.
- e. The **technical report**.
- f. The **consent forms** of all the interviewed respondents (in case of online interviewing, consent must also be collected; in case audio-recorded voice consents were used for special cases, those should be included as well).

6. WORK TEAM

According to the provisions of the Administrative Specifications document, the awarded company will designate a technical team with experience in conducting socio-scientific and/or socio-demographic surveys. The awarded company will appoint a project leader who will act as the intermediary with the UAB team. It will also be necessary to include a team of supervisors and, if applicable, interviewers in each country to carry out the tasks described in this specification within the required deadlines and quality conditions. The technical profile and tasks to be performed by each person assigned to the team, as well as their dedication (%) to the total process and per phases, must be specified.

7. INTERPRETATION OF CONTRADICTIONS AND OMISSIONS IN THE SPECIFICATIONS

The awarded company will be obligated to bring to the attention of the project management any omissions or contradictions found in the specification. Any interpretation or clarification regarding the specification is the exclusive competence of the contract manager or the person to whom she delegates.

8. STATISTICAL SECRECY, OWNERSHIP, AND CONTINUITY GUARANTEE

8.1. Statistical secrecy

The company that is awarded the tender will be obligated to maintain statistical secrecy to ensure the protection of individualized private data to which it has access as a result of carrying out the assigned work.

Compliance with this obligation is also the responsibility of the awarded company, encompassing all actions and/or omissions of its personnel, both during all phases of the work's execution and after its completion.

8.2. Ownership

The documentation, the questionnaire management software, materials, and data files generated during the process of data collection will be considered the property of the contracting administration, which will manage their utilization and use in accordance with its contract with the European Research Council.

8.3. Continuity guarantee

The company that is awarded the contract must guarantee the complete execution of the work and will be responsible for any costs that may arise from a hypothetical necessary replacement.