

FORS 

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Annual Report 2023

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1. Editorial from the FORS Director

Marking the 15th anniversary of FORS

In 2023, FORS celebrated its 15th anniversary, marking a significant milestone alongside many colleagues and staff who have contributed to our journey. This occasion provided an opportunity for reflection on FORS's current standing and future direction.

FORS operates in a rapidly evolving research environment, increasingly driven by data. The volume of data available for research is expanding, but it also poses challenges. First, *Data Accessibility and Usability*; a significant portion of the data, whether from research, administration, or the public sector, does not adhere to the FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable). Second, *Understanding Data Quality*; assessing data quality is becoming more complex, requiring expertise to understand its implications and limitations. Third, *Data Ownership and Copyright Issues*; new forms of data raise intricate questions about ownership and usage rights, complicating data sharing and use.

Moreover, the balance between data openness and personal data protection is contradictory in policy discussions. Traditional data collection methods, like surveys, also face challenges. In Switzerland, the diminishing number of institutes capable of conducting high-standard face-to-face interviews and the increasing unavailability of telephone numbers for sample data significantly impact our data collection strategies.

FORS responds to these challenges in different ways. Through methodological research and adaptive strategies, we have maintained high-quality data collection without experiencing drops in response rates or biases. We have invested in new tools and services; notably, the development of SWISSUbase, a collaborative project with several universities and other partners, serves as a multidisciplinary platform for data depositing and sharing. SWISSUbase is also the joint platform of the national nodes of key European infrastructure in the social sciences and humanities such as CESSDA, CLARIN and DARIAH. We are developing an infrastructure for secure data analysis, anticipating a future where direct data download may be replaced by analysis within a trusted environment. And we actively participate in national dialogues on research policies and data infrastructures which reflects our commitment to advancing social science research.

Internally, FORS adapts by maintaining organisational flexibility. To respond to new developments, FORS continually evolves its structure and processes. With government funding likely insufficient in the upcoming founding round 2025–2028, we are increasingly reliant on third-party funding, especially for new initiatives. We also actively engage with various other stakeholders to shape the long-term strategy for funding and governance of research infrastructures like FORS. Our focus also remains on making FORS an attractive workplace for highly qualified staff.

The success of a research infrastructure like FORS hinges on committed individuals with a vision for advancing the discipline, the patience to drive long-term projects, and the ability to foster inclusive collaborations. Our efforts centre around producing high-quality scientific data, platforms, and services, and ensuring equitable data access for the entire research community. We are lucky to have highly qualified staff doing all of this.

We believe FORS is well-equipped to continue fulfilling our mission, evolving dynamically and adapting to changes, thereby remaining a reliable partner for researchers in Switzerland and beyond.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Georg Lutz', written in a cursive style.

Prof. Dr. Georg Lutz, Director

2. Surveys

FORS is responsible for a number of national and international surveys, mostly funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF). The surveys described below are part of the standard FORS data collection funded during the period 2021–2024. FORS academic surveys can also use the sample frame “Stichprobenrahmen für Haushalts- und Personenbefragungen SRPH” of the Swiss Federal Statistical Office (SFSO). This sample frame is based on official registers and allows high-precision sampling of individuals resident within Switzerland. The sample frame centralises information from cantonal and communal population registers which are updated on a quarterly basis.

In addition to these surveys financed by the SNSF, a whole series of projects, sometimes very innovative and with high scientific added value, were carried out by the Data Collection and Analysis Team (see [Chapter 7. Data collection and analysis DCA](#)). Often conducted in close collaboration with their clients, they were financed by third-party funds from researchers or public entities.

2.1 Swiss Household Panel SHP

Seven principal tasks

The SHP team achieved seven principal tasks in 2023:

1. The fieldwork for the four SHP samples that had started by the end of August 2022, was completed in mid-March. This concerned Wave 24 of the SHP_I (2 246 households and 3 410 individuals interviewed), Wave 19 of the SHP_II (1 027 households and 1 539 individuals interviewed), Wave 10 of the SHP_III (1 421 households and 2 133 individuals interviewed), and Wave 3 of the SHP_IV (2 564 households and 4 387 individuals interviewed). In total 7 258 households and 11 469 individuals participated. For detailed information about participation rates, see [these tables](#) (PDF). The main mode of interviewing remains CATI for the older samples (SHP_I to SHP_III). Less than 0.5% of the participants in these three samples were interviewed face-to-face, while around 3% participated via web (CAWI) at the household level and 12% (SHP_II and SHP_III) at the individual level. Web is a bit less common at the individual level in the oldest sample (SHP_I, 11%). The most recent sample (SHP_IV) followed a different design, using CATI if a telephone number was available, and CAWI otherwise at the first wave completed in 2021, being thus a real mixed-mode survey. In the third wave, 62% of household questionnaires were completed by CATI (this was 60% in wave 2) and 38% by CAWI (40% in Wave 2). For the individual questionnaires this was 55% and 45% respectively (identical to Wave 2). The distribution of modes is therefore stable between Wave 2 and Wave 3. In total, 161 interviewers and supervisors from MIS Trend carried out

the telephone interviews (95 in Bern, 66 in Lausanne) and managed the online data collection. The average duration of the CATI questionnaire was around 12 minutes (10 minutes in CAWI) at the household level and 37 minutes (32 in CAWI) at the individual level, for all samples. This was 6 minutes less than the previous wave, thanks to efforts to reduce the length of the rotating modules. The rotating modules administered in this wave included social network and leisure & culture. From April to December the SHP team carried out the work related to data checking, cleaning and preparation, construction of variables, and documentation in order to prepare the data dissemination via SWISSUbase ([Swiss Household Panel - Living in Switzerland](#)) at the beginning of 2024. The dissemination package contains the following data sets: annual household and individual data, unique files (such as social origin), Cross-National Equivalent File (CNEF) data, imputed income and wealth data, interviewer data, and a long file. Suggesting the provision of a long file to data users emerged during the SHP evaluation in 2021, and was endorsed by the SHP Scientific Commission to facilitate working with longitudinal data for SHP data users. It also contains documentation such as questionnaires and a user guide, as well as example syntaxes.

2. Between February and August, the SHP team prepared the fieldwork for Waves 25 (SHP_I), 20 (SHP_II), 11 (SHP_III), and 4 (SHP_IV). This involved preparing the questionnaires (integrating annual changes and adaptations), a quantitative pre-test (creation of scenarios to test the programming of the questionnaire), communicating with participating households (various letters and newsletters), updating the interviewer manual, and training the interviewers (several sessions in Bern and Lausanne). The fieldwork started as planned at the end of August 2023. The rotating modules administered in this wave are social participation, political attitudes and values (with new questions on the environment and asylum seekers), and opinions about the family.
3. A revised and harmonised version of the SHP data Waves 1 to 24 (1999 to 2022), with a codebook, was prepared for inclusion in the [Cross-National Equivalent File](#) (CNEF) at the beginning of 2023. The CNEF focuses mainly on employment, income, and health and includes detailed harmonised variables that require additional recoding and imputations. It contains equivalently defined variables for the world's largest household panels. CNEF members are the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID), the Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP), the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS), the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID), the Russian Longitudinal Monitoring Survey (RLMS), the Korean Labor & Income Panel Study (KLIPS), the Swiss Household Panel (SHP), the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey (HILDA), the Japan Household Panel Survey (JHPS), and the UK Household Longitudinal Study Understanding Society (UKHLS). The

SHP has been a longstanding partner in this cross-national collaboration. The SHP data are also included in the Comparative Panel File (CPF) project ([CPF – Comparative Panel File – cpfddata.com](https://cpfddata.com)). CPF delivers the syntax to harmonise data from large household panels (the panels mentioned above minus the Japan Household Panel Survey JHPS), supporting the social science community in the analysis of comparative life course data. Although the SHP is in contact with the CPF, the SHP team is not involved in the preparation of the syntax for the harmonised variables.

4. The 12th International Conference of Panel Data Users in Switzerland took place on 14–15 June at the University of Lausanne. The scientific programme contained two plenary sessions (the first was dedicated to the feminist strike 2023, the second to the Comparative Panel File (CPF)), and the regular parallel sessions on different topics (education & labour market, families & gender, health & well-being, politics, minorities & migration, and longitudinal methods & survey methodology). Contributions were based on SHP data but also on other longitudinal studies from Switzerland and abroad, such as the Transitions from education to employment study (TREE), the UK Household Longitudinal Study Understanding Society (UKHLS), the German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP), the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey, the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE), the EU statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC), the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent and Adult Health, the panel of the Swiss Election Study Selects, and the panel of the National Human Development Observatory (Morocco). The conference also hosted two invited sessions: one by TREE (the TREE panel study), and one by SHARE, devoted to health literacy. In total the conference included 34 presentations. The conference was attended by around 60 participants and was much appreciated.
5. In February 2022, the Scientific Advisory Board of FORS validated the creation of an SHP scientific commission. The main tasks of this commission are to ensure the quality and relevance of the SHP data and metadata, and to strengthen the SHP social science research network in Swiss universities and beyond. The commission is composed of nine members: Prof. Daniel Oesch (University of Lausanne, Chair), Dr. Jonathan Burton (University of Essex), Dr. Marco Giesselmann (University of Zurich), Dr. Markus Grabka (DIW Berlin), Prof. Elisabeth Gutjahr (Haute école de travail social Fribourg), Dr. Oriane Sarrasin (University of Lausanne), Dr. Annette Scherpenzeel (Netherlands Institute for Health Services Research), Prof. Rainer Winkelmann (University of Zurich), and Prof. Boris Wernli (FORS). The commission's first meeting took place on 2 February. The discussions led to six main conclusions. First, the commission strongly recommends FORS to continue with refreshments samples, given the comparably small sample size of the SHP when compared to its counterparts. Consequently, the funding for another refreshment sample should be included

in the next funding period of FORS. Second, the commission unanimously acknowledges the benefits of data linkage, but is also aware of the legal, ethical, administrative, and practical issues that the linkage of register data with survey data raises. The commission believes that even modest advances would be beneficial. Third, the commission also recommends investigating in greater user-friendliness of the SHP, particularly in a long file (see above). Fourth, the commission agreed that the SHP would benefit from the inclusion of genetic information, following the example of SOEP and UKLHS. In this respect, initial contacts have been made with the Diabetes Center Berne (DCB). This centre is interested in working with the SHP on this issue. Fifth, several commissioners urged the inclusion of questions concerning the ecological transition. As a first step, new questions on the environment were included in the current wave. Sixth, the commission believes that addressing these challenges head-on may require additional resources for the SHP team.

6. Regarding the refreshment sample, the SHP has prepared a document defining the design of the SHP_V. After internal discussions, the SHP proposes a random sample of the population without oversampling. The main consideration for this choice is that this would follow the same approach as taken for earlier refreshment samples, making it the lowest-cost option with the least complexity to implement and producing data that are easiest to work with for SHP data users. The target should be to reach a sample of similar size as the SHP_IV in terms of completed interviews in the first wave (about 7 500 individual interviews and 4 600 households). With the exception of refusal conversions, the mode used will be CAWI.
7. Finally, the SHP team helped define its requirements and test the implementation of the Survey Management Tool SMT. The migration of the SHP application into SMT is scheduled for the first quarter of 2024 (see [Chapter 4. IT developments](#)).

2.2 International Surveys

2023 was centred on MOSAiCH 2023 (field, preparation of the next edition and archiving of the previous one), ESS Round 11 (field), and finally for SHARE the data preparation of Wave 9 and the preparation of Wave 10. Synergies and collaborations between these international surveys are numerous, not only internally at FORS but also on the international level through projects such as ESS Sustain 2, where EVS and ESS collaborate, or the SSHOC project (Social Science and Humanities Open Cloud).

ESS

The European Social Survey (ESS) is an academically driven cross-national survey that has been conducted every two years across Europe since 2002, maintaining very high-quality standards. Switzerland has consistently participated in each round since the very beginning. This general population survey assesses the attitudes, beliefs and behaviour patterns of diverse populations in more than thirty nations. In 2023, Switzerland played a crucial role in fielding the essential part of ESS Round 11.

Fieldwork preparation

The translation phase finished in January, the questionnaire implementation in the survey agency's tool was tested in January and the quantitative pre-tests and final amendments were done in February. The first interviewer briefing round took place in March (7th, 8th and 14th).

During 2023, the Swiss team also actively participated in the preparations for Round 12 and 13, to help design the future self-completion mode for ESS.

Fieldwork

The fieldwork of the ESS Round 11 (with rotating parts on the topics "Health inequalities" and "Gender in contemporary Europe") started as planned on 8 March and was supposed to finish by the end of December. Because of low interviewer capacity and strong difficulties in contacting respondents, the field achieved only 1 357 interviews by the end of the year.

Many interviewer briefings took place all through the field period, and the reduced number of active interviewers were regularly retrained based on the results of intermediate data to reduce as much as possible any interviewer bias. It has finally been agreed with the ESS headquarters to extend the field by one month without releasing the reserve sample, to avoid potential non-response bias. ESS will therefore not achieve the target number of interviews (1 500) and probably end with a response rate closer to 45% than 50%.

Despite the extended field period, the Swiss data should still be part of the first ESS data release. The length of the field period is comparable to the one during the COVID-19 pandemic, indicating that the pandemic induced long lasting societal transformations that could not be compensated by the survey agency and the NC team despite enormous efforts. Moreover, all the response-enhancing measures developed for the pandemic were still in place. For example, in Round 11, less than 4% of the interviews will be done by video call, which is comparable to Round 10, and about 15% outside the respondent's home, which is only slightly lower than during the pandemic.

Data

The survey agency delivered four interim raw data sets of the interview data on 6 June, 4 July, 30 August and 31 October. They were used to detect undesirable interviewer behaviour and to target the retraining of the interviewers. Moreover, they allowed preparing for the cleaning and coding of the survey data in order to have a smooth and timely delivery to the ESS data archive Sikt in Bergen, Norway, before the end of February 2024.

In 2023, the ESS data archive Sikt released the following datasets: ESS Round 10 third release including all 30 countries, as well as several corrections of current and past datasets.

As of 31 December, the ESS had over 228 000 registered users, with 6 500 from Switzerland. Despite its small size, Switzerland ranks 12th in terms of the number of registered users, active downloaders, and downloads ([ESS interactive user statistics](#)). The latest bibliographic assessment (2003–22) revealed that 6 585 publications have included significant analysis of ESS data. It highlighted active involvement of various academic disciplines, with sociology, political science, and economics as primary domains. The covered topics extend across key research areas, including politics, immigration, family research, demographic issues, well-being and health, culture and values, welfare and public policies, citizenship and social capital, paid work, and social inequality. Swiss data are included in 59% of these publications. 255 authors were from Switzerland (9th rank), meaning that there is a high demand for and productive use of ESS data in Switzerland.

International

In 2023, the ERIC National Coordinator Forums took place in April in Prague and in November virtually. The main topics of these meetings were: R11 field management and data preparation, the rotating modules for Round 12 (“Immigration” and “Personal and social wellbeing”), transition to self-completion (SC), and general matters. The preparation of the transition to SC (web-paper),

effective in Round 13 (2027), and the specifications for Round 12 with parallel FtF and SC fields (in 2025) have been central topics, with extensive collaborative procedures.

The ESS ERIC General assembly met in March and November, as well as in January and October for an extraordinary GA. In 2023, Lea Bühlmann, Scientific Advisor at the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) replaced Georg Lutz as representative of Switzerland in the GA. To assure a smooth transition, they both participated in the March meeting, and several meetings were held with the new representative who is working towards Switzerland becoming a full member of the ESS ERIC. Meanwhile, in 2023 the observer status of Switzerland was confirmed again. In 2023, the ESS ERIC gained one member (Montenegro), increasing full membership from 27 to 28 members. ESS ERIC continues to have the highest number of member countries of any ERIC. In addition, there are three guest countries (Greece, Kosovo, and Ukraine), and Switzerland participates as an observer, making a total of 32 countries participating in Round 11.

Switzerland is represented also in other governing boards: the Scientific Advisory Board (by a researcher from the UNIL) and the Methods Advisory Board (by a researcher from FORS and UNIL); both acted as Chair of their respective boards in 2023. The composition of the General Assembly, the Scientific Advisory Board and the Methods Advisory Board was updated in October 2023. A detailed overview of all members can be viewed [here](#).

MOSAiCH / ISSP During 2023, the sixth edition of the annual MOSAiCH survey took place. This self-completion survey (web-paper, push-to-web design), conducted in several parts, is realised internally. The content is defined by the ISSP (part 1) and a public contribution call addressing the Swiss research community (part 2). In 2023, the central topic was “National Identity and Citizenship”, a merged module. The team prepared and finalised the data preparation and documentation of MOSAiCH 2023 for a release early 2024. The preparation of the 2024 edition of MOSAiCH has also been carried out. At the international level of the ISSP, the team ran the ISSP Secretariat, organised the ISSP General Assembly and launched an impressive series of promotion activities.

Field and research

MOSAiCH 2023 is composed of the ISSP 2023 module on National Identity and Citizenship, a module that combines National Identity (conducted in 1995, 2003, and 2013) and Citizenship (fielded in 2004 and 2014), and questions from four different proposals, involving 7 researchers of Switzerland. The topics of the chosen proposals are: 1) Immigration Misperceptions: Exploring their Nature

and Drivers 2) Intentionalism in Sociological Attitudes toward Immigrants 3) Nationalism, Identification to one's Country, and Meaning in Life 4) National and Supranational Collective Narcissism, Identity, and Immigration Attitudes.

While the preparation of the MOSAiCH 2023 questionnaire was mostly achieved during 2022 (the call, the evaluation of the proposals, the development and testing of the new questions, and the translations of the ISSP and call questions), the survey was set up early 2023. The MOSAiCH Commission decided to run the 2023 edition in two parts, all respondents of the first part being invited to the second part in the mode of their first response. The second part includes no experimental design, but two series of questions presented in random order on the web. The tests run with the FORS Connect panel in late 2022 showed, for instance, only very little impact of the order of the vignettes.

The fieldwork of MOSAiCH 2023 started mid-February 2023 (first invitation letter sent 17 February) and ended in July, based on the optimised contact procedure used since 2019 and a 10 CHF cash unconditional incentive as well as a lottery for the second part. At the time of writing this report, the data and documentation are in the final preparation phase. The final response rate RR should be around 53% for the first part and 35% for the second part, which is almost as high as the outstanding MOSAiCH 2021 (RR 55% with same incentivisation scheme), despite a usually less attractive topic. The data will be published in February 2024.

2024 preparations

The public call for question contributions to the MOSAiCH 2024 edition including the ISSP "Digital Societies" module has first been published at the end of 2022. The Scientific MOSAiCH Commission received and evaluated eight proposals. During the evaluation meeting in June, it was decided to retain seven of them (four with a reduced number of items), involving 15 researchers from Switzerland and abroad. The questions will be administered in a single follow-up wave to the ISSP questionnaire. The accepted questions have been elaborated by the "International Surveys" team in collaboration with the proposing authors. Qualitative tests have been performed by the authors. All the questions have been translated into the national languages with the usual TRAPD procedure, like the ISSP questionnaire.

The call for question contributions to the MOSAiCH 2025 edition including the ISSP "Work orientation" module was published at the end of 2023.

Data

The complete MOSAiCH 2022 dataset, including ISSP 2022 (Family and Changing Gender Roles V) and all data related to the Call, was documented and published in SWISSUbase in February 2023. FORS distributed more than 110 MOSAiCH-ISSP datafiles in 2023.

For ISSP, the international ISSP-archive at GESIS published the final release of ISSP 2020 “Environment IV” in August, containing 28 countries (and one country published as a separate datafile). The cumulative file of ISSP “Role of Government I-V” was also published during the summer, including the last module of 2016 including 31 countries. Both international datasets include Swiss data. The GESIS archive has over 50 000 registered users (over 1 000 from Switzerland) and distributed over 15 500 ISSP datasets, including Swiss data, in 2023.

ISSP international

In charge of the Secretariat since 2021, FORS has continued the coordination activities of the programme.

As in previous years, the priority remains to ensure the smooth operation of the 2021, 2022, and 2023 programmes following the pandemic. This includes the possibility of postponing data deposits and easing working principles to support the continued membership of countries facing difficulties. The major objective was to return to the usual ISSP working principles and agenda in 2023 and onwards (with a staged strategy to recover the delays in data deposits for 2024). The in-person 2023 General Assembly (GA) was held in Reykjavik (29 April to 3 May), with four FORS collaborators to represent both Switzerland and the Secretariat. The GA discussed and voted the questions of the 2024 module on ‘Digital Societies’ as well as the topics of the 2025 module “Work Orientation V”. The proposed and accepted topic for the 2026 programme is “Role of government VI”, a module previously fielded in 2016.

As of now, the ISSP is composed of 45 member countries, including the Netherlands, which was newly reinstated during the last General Assembly. The Netherlands, like other countries which changed their data collection, is “conditionally” accepted as ISSP does not formally accept probability-based online panel as survey design. There were intense discussions on the requirements to accept such a design, notably in terms of sampling plan and refreshment, weighting plan, and measures of quality, on which further discussions and a vote will take place at the next 2024 GA in Sydney.

Beside the organisation of the annual GA and the daily business of coordination, the ISSP intranet website (www.issp.org) was improved to ease the coordination between the Secretariat, the GESIS Archive, and the countries. As outreach activities, the Secretariat has launched a new ISSP research series on X (formerly Twitter) highlighting articles based on ISSP data. The ISSP website has as much as 150 visits and 450 actions per day and the X account assures a regular presence (1 179 followers). ISSP panels of sessions were organised at the WAPOR and the ESRA conference in 2023, with both substantial and methodological

scopes. There, the team presented a comparative paper assessing coverage and measurement biases in push-to-web design, based on Swiss and Finnish web-paper ISSP data.

In December 2023, the 2nd online ISSP Conference on the topic of Environment was held with three sessions, 11 papers and an audience of around 50 researchers. This online conference was organised jointly between the Secretariat and the Editor of the International Journal of Sociology to allow presenters to submit their paper on the topic for the Special Issue of the journal at the end of the year.

Next year marks the 40th anniversary of the ISSP. Special activities will be organised both during the 2024 General Assembly and online throughout the year.

EVS

The last EVS field was in 2017 and the next is scheduled for 2026. A team member presented EVS results at the ESRA Conference in July and at the WAPOR conference in September.

The EVS held two annual General Assemblies in 2023. The first took place online on 15 June and the second in-person on 20 October in Bucharest. The focus of the first meeting was on deciding on a new scenario for the EVS 2026. The Scientific Committee proposed three out of five possible scenarios. The “dynamic” scenario, which envisions an EVS 2026 wave based on the WVS/ EVS Common Core questionnaire, was adopted. This scenario also includes a rejuvenation of the EVS questionnaire, aligning it with the concept of “European Values”, particularly in response to the current geopolitical challenges in Europe and the ongoing discourse surrounding shared European Values. The scenario also includes collaboration with the ESS. The basis of new methodological guidelines was presented and adopted by the GA, that include a mixed-mode design, based on “best mode that applies” for each country (web, web/paper, face-to-face).

In the second GA, the cooperations between the ESS and the WVS (World Values Survey) were discussed. The EVS signed the Memorandum of Understanding with the WVS that foresees that EVS fields the WVS in Europe, so that there is no competition between EVS and WVS. The Common Core was discussed as well. Regarding the collaboration with ESS, it was decided to work on a Memorandum of Understanding with the ESS also if the EVS Module is not secured.

As part of the collaboration with the ESS, data of the module on Morale Values, entitled “EVS-MORALBOUNDS” was released in June 2023 as part of the CRONOS-2 panel fielded in 12 countries, not including Switzerland, though. The EVS has furthermore teamed up with the ESS, CESSDA and GGP to submit the project “INFRA4NEXTGEN” to Horizon Europe, which was granted 9.75m Euros.

The download of EVS data continues to be high in number, with almost 8 000 in 2023, compared to 9 000 in 2022. This demonstrates the continued relevance of the EVS as an infrastructure for social sciences in Europe and beyond. The EVS bibliography now comprises around 3 300 publications, reflecting a growth of about 400 in one year.

SHARE

In 2023, SHARE activities were divided between operational activities related to Waves 9 and 10, research activities promoting and using SHARE data, and the preparation of various grant applications.

Operational activities

Wave 9 data were verified and cleaned for the public release, currently planned for Spring 2024. At the same time, the Swiss SHARE team carried out several preparatory tasks in view of the Wave 10 main data collection. The planned fieldwork is scheduled to start in autumn 2024. The Wave 10 contract has been finalised, and a call for tenders was published. Following this, the survey agency LINK was mandated to carry out the Wave 10 fieldwork.

The Wave 10 questionnaire items were translated and internally tested and the Wave 10 paper-and-pencil questionnaire on health literacy and end-of-life issues was finalised. The sampling plan for a substantial refreshment sample for Wave 10 was drawn up.

The Swiss SHARE team attended the following SHARE meetings:

- » SHARE Wave 10 pretest preparation meeting (3–5 May, Iași, Romania).
- » SHARE Wave 10 post pretest meeting (25–27 October, Bratislava, Slovakia).

Promotion activities

The Swiss SHARE team worked on several projects to promote SHARE data use in the scientific community and highlight the value of SHARE data and SHARE-related research among the general population.

- » The Swiss SHARE team conducted a workshop in March on the development of end-of-life care planning in Switzerland on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the introduction of advance directives (AD) in the Swiss Civil Code. About 40 people attended the workshop, and 20 presentations were delivered by scientists and professionals from all around Switzerland and in different disciplines (e.g., medicine, ethics, sociology, psychology, law, economics).
- » The Swiss SHARE team, together with members from the International Surveys team and a researcher from the UNIL, co-organised a workshop entitled “How to measure Health” for the huge public event “Mystères de l’UNIL” held on 1–4 June. The aim was to give children aged 8–12 an introduction to data literacy and to raise public awareness of FORS surveys, which collect data on the health of the Swiss population.

Research activities

The Swiss SHARE team is currently working on three research axes. The first axis concerns research activities on social, regional, health, and attitudinal determinants of end-of-life care and planning in older adults in collaboration with the Palliative and Supportive Care Service and the Institute of Humanities in Medicine of Lausanne University Hospital and the UNIL. In 2023, six papers were published, and three others were submitted to international scientific peer-reviewed journals. Research regarding end-of-life care and planning was presented at the following conferences/workshops:

- » The 8th International Conference on Advance Care Planning (24–27 May, Singapore, two presentations and three posters)
- » The Swiss Public Health Conference (12 September, Lausanne, two presentations)
- » The “Congrès National des Soins Palliatifs” (22–23 November, Biel, one presentation and two posters)

A second research axis aims to study the determinants and consequences of individuals’ health literacy. In 2023, three papers were published, and another was submitted to an international scientific peer-reviewed journal. Research regarding health literacy was also presented at the following conference:

- » The 16th European Public Health Conference (8–11 November, Dublin, two presentations)

Finally, the last research axis pertains to technology use among Swiss seniors and is based on a paper-and-pencil questionnaire that was distributed among the Swiss SHARE participants in 2021. A scientific paper has been submitted for publication in collaboration with the Geneva Centre for Interdisciplinary Study of Gerontology and Vulnerability (CIGEV). A further paper co-authored with the Center of Gerontology of the University of Zurich (ZfG) and a report for the Leenaards Foundation are under preparation.

Grant applications

The Swiss SHARE team won two grants, one from the Velux Foundation and an SNSF research grant. The Velux grant is financing a Delphi study aimed at identifying priorities for future aging research in social sciences. The SNSF research grant will finance the ongoing research programme of the Swiss SHARE team on end-of-life and health literacy.

An additional research grant was submitted to the so-called “Swiss funds” in cooperation with the Czech SHARE team to finance the collection of additional biomarkers related to neurodegenerative disease and depression in Wave 11. A research grant is also under preparation and will be submitted to NutriBrain in January 2024 to secure funding for the implementation of the Harmonised Cognitive Assessment Protocol (HCAP) in Wave 11, whose aim is to measure and understand dementia risks.

Finally, a grant application was submitted to the Brocher Foundation for the organisation of a hackathon in June 2025.

2.3 Political surveys

In 2023, the Political Surveys team POLS focused on preparing and executing the Swiss Election Study 2023, finalising the 2019–2023 Selects panel, and engaging in research and outreach activities. The collaborations with international networks like CCS, CSES, CNES and MEDem are described in chapter 5.

Selects, Fieldwork and Data Preparation

Selects 2023 comprises four components. First, an online panel survey, including a pre-campaign, campaign, and post-election wave, aims to analyse voters' opinion formation processes and campaign dynamics. In June, the pre-campaign wave went into the field. Sample members were invited by postal letter, accompanied by a flyer and a data protection information sheet. They were promised to participate in a raffle of 5 x 300 CHF at the end of the survey. Almost 8 200 Swiss citizens, which corresponds to a response rate of 27%, completed the questionnaire. The second wave began during the election campaign in early September, and retaining 75% of participants from Wave 1 (N=6 078). The third wave started the day after the national election in October. All participants from the second wave were invited to this post-election wave. 5 578 questionnaires were completed, with a retention rate of 92%). As in Wave 2, respondents got a conditional incentive of 10 CHF in cash. All respondents who provided a valid email address will be invited to annual follow-up surveys, running until 2027.

Second, the Selects post-election study integrated module 6 of the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES). The sample consisted of a national representative sample, with a target of 80 responses in the small cantons, and an oversample for the cantons of Geneva and Ticino, financed by the cantons themselves. The PES was fielded as a sequential mixed-mode online/paper survey, with a push to web design. Sample members were contacted by postal letter and received a 10 CHF unconditional cash incentive. The paper questionnaire was sent with the second reminder letter. Data collection lasted until the end of the year. Overall, almost 5 200 Swiss citizens participated in the survey, notably 11% by paper and 89% online, which corresponds to a (provisional) response rate of approximately 50 %.

Third, in collaboration with Politools and the University of Bern, Selects conducted, for the fifth time in a row, an online/paper candidate survey, with a push to web design. All candidates running for the National Council and the Council of States were invited to the survey by postal letter, resulting in a provisional response rate of approximately 41% (N= 2 380 responses).

Fourth, Selects mandated the Hochschule für Wirtschaft Zurich (HWZ) to conduct a media and social media study. Due to limited access to X (formerly Twitter) for research, the study was finally constrained to a semi-automated analysis of traditional news media (print and online). For each news article, the main topic, mentioned parties and candidates, and sentiment were coded.

For the first time, the three surveys underwent ethical review by the Central Ethics Committee of the UNIL, receiving approval. Data from Selects 2023 will be publicly available on SWISSUbase in the summer of 2024.

Finalisation of the 2019–2023 Selects Panel

The Selects Panel Survey, initially designed as a three-wave campaign panel in 2019, evolved into a long-term panel with annual follow-up waves. In January 2023, data from the 2022 annual wave (Wave 6) was published on SWISSUbase. The 2022 wave includes a total of 2 178 valid interviews (AAPOR 2 response rate: 76 %). In addition to the standard panel questions, the questionnaire included various questions on current events like the war in Ukraine, energy shortages, and COVID-19.

The final Wave 7 started as a post-election survey after the federal elections in October. Sample members received an invitation letter with a personal login and an unconditional cash incentive of 10 CHF. The online survey was carried out internally at FORS between 23 October and 11 December. About 2 500 respondents completed the questionnaire with a provisional response rate of 89%. The data will be released in Spring 2024 and will facilitate a comparison of party choice between the 2019 and 2023 federal elections.

Research and outreach

The team showcased ongoing research at national and international conferences, covering topics such as the multidimensionality of attitudes towards European integration, the impact of multiple crises on EU support, and the influence of COVID-19 on partisanship. The team also contributed to outreach activities, including an article in the series Social Change in Switzerland on the development of party affiliations in Switzerland 1971–2019 and a press article in the journal *Le Temps* about the evolution of party identification in Switzerland. Team members also contributed to an interview series on the blog *DeFacto*, addressing relevant questions for the federal elections, gave various interviews to the media, and participated in three roundtables (two at the UNIL, one at the Haus der Kantone in Bern) and a podcast on the topic of federal elections.

A notable achievement was the initiation of the SNSF-funded research project “Swiss Direct Democracy in the 21st century” ([SDD-21](#)). The team leader serves as a co-PI of this project, collaborating with political scientists from eight Swiss universities and the Liechtenstein Institute. The project explores the impact of advertising campaigns, digital media, moral attitudes, and political sophistication

on citizens' mobilisation, opinion-formation, and vote decision. To study these questions, the project conducts an online post-vote survey after each federal vote and invites respondents to join a long-term, feed-in panel that will run until 2027. The first cross-sectional survey, conducted by the Data Collection and Analysis (DCA) team at FORS after the federal vote in June 2023, yielded 2 122 valid responses which corresponds to a response rate of 20%. Respondents with a valid email address were invited to participate in a post-election survey in October. This first panel wave retained 57% of respondents and will contribute valuable insights into the relationship between elections and direct democracy in Switzerland.

3. Data and research information services DARISS

2023 was eventful for the DARISS unit, especially due to significant changes in personnel, with the retirement of the previous leader of the data archive group and the recruitment of the new leader, as well as the hiring of new three new staff members in the archive and the data management groups. The resulting transitions made for various challenges in assuring continuity and meeting unit objectives. Fortunately, as the following sections show, DARISS was very successful in achieving its goals for the year, including in data acquisition and dissemination as well as in its outreach and training activities.

In September of 2023, thanks to the work particularly of the data archive group, FORS was awarded the [CoreTrustSeal](#) certification for another three years. Further, the trainings and workshops in aspects of data management in 2023 were numerous and succeeded in attracting quite many participants (see details below). DARISS staff across the Data Archive Services (DAS) and Data Management Support (DMS) groups were also very active in 2023 with the publication of new FORS Guides on: a) data citation, b) qualitative data anonymisation and c) data sharing in the social sciences.

In addition to their continuing contributions to international projects, DARISS staff were also successful in securing new third-party national projects with partners in 2023 that start in 2024. This includes the swissuniversities project Recognising Open Research Data “[recORD](#)”, which will aim to provide more incentives for ORD practices by researchers, and the swissuniversities project RDM@SSM, which will develop and implement a new curriculum in data management for the social sciences within the Swiss Summer School.

Data archive

In 2023, the Data Archive Services (DAS) group archived 104 datasets, compared to 60 in 2022 and 2021. Among those, 85 were new datasets, and 19 were updates of existing datasets due to new data or corrections. This brings the number of datasets curated by DAS and currently published in SWISSUbase to 906. 2 322 social science datasets were downloaded from SWISSUbase in 2023, compared to 2 085 in 2022 (see [Chapter 8. Performance Indicators](#)). 73% of the social science datasets were downloaded for research, 15% for teaching, and 10% for research and teaching. For 2% of the downloads the data recipient did not indicate a purpose. The research project catalogue comprised around 12 200 descriptions in the social sciences, with 277 newly published entries by the end of 2023.

The DAS group guided researchers from multiple research projects at various institutions in Switzerland and abroad in best practices for archiving and sharing their research data. Overall, there is a strong demand for individual consultancy for data archiving, in particular, with respect to sensitive data and data protection requirements. Through individual consultancies, DAS ensures that the archived data is of high quality and has strong re-use potential.

Data dissemination is another focus of the work of DAS. The group regularly helps researchers and students to find suitable data for secondary analyses. To remain up-to-date with recent developments of SWISSUbase as well as the legal data protection landscape, DAS continued with the updating of policies, contracts, and documentation relative to data deposit, archiving, and access at FORS. Amongst others, the data protection policy was updated in 2023.

As in previous years, DAS contributed to the SWISSUbase Operational Group, which works within the consortium towards the design, development, and testing of new platform features. Drawing on in-depth experience of data curation and archiving, DAS plays a major role in the consortium. DAS also continued to be involved in producing guides, and participated with the DTS team in delivering trainings for consortium partner Data Service Units (DSUs).

An important achievement in September 2023 was the renewal of the CoreTrustSeal certification for the FORS data service. With the previous switch from FORSbase to SWISSUbase, this was an important step for the accreditation of the archive. In order to enhance services for users, DAS also expanded its expertise in various topics related to data archiving and re-use, including data citation. In addition to data archiving, DAS also maintained the recently established FORS Replication Service and helped researchers to deposit replication materials, such as syntaxes.

Finally, members of DAS continued their involvement as task leaders or members in international projects related to archiving and research infrastructures. This includes CESSDA-related activities, as well as the European projects eRImote and RiTrainPlus (see Chapter 5. International collaborations).

Data promotion

As part of its active data solicitation strategy, DARISS continued to reach out to the PIs of newly funded SNSF projects, as well as pursued its efforts to reach out to underrepresented disciplines, in particular the field of education which received particular attention in 2023. Most importantly, the Data Management Support group (DMS) intensified outreach efforts to higher level actors at the institutional or disciplinary level to promote FORS services and discuss their needs. This resulted in invitations to conferences and presentations during

key events (i.e., stakeholder meetings and disciplinary associations' annual meetings). This included a keynote presentation on the legal framework of Open Data for educational research. The DMS group also collaborated with the University of Applied Sciences of the Grisons to conduct a landscape analysis of data producers in education research, and produced a first draft of a paper on the educational landscape in Switzerland. The paper was presented at the European Educational Research Association conference, which took place in Glasgow in August.

In 2023 the DMS group also established and started a pilot project with the Swiss Social Work Association (SGSA) as a way to improve disciplinary coverage in the database of research projects and ultimately receive more data. While in 2023 the group set up the collaboration and identified the main institutions involved in social work research, next steps to be conducted in 2024 include seeking institutional collaborations to facilitate the harvesting of project descriptions in SWISSUbase.

As a way to better promote the services and SWISSUbase, the DMS group continued offering workshops and presentations to both the research community and data stewards (see section below on data management). In 2023 DMS also reinforced the efforts to promote data re-use, and successfully ran the second edition of a paper prize competition based on FORS data.

Data management

As in previous years, the group continued to provide advanced data management events during 2023, with a growing demand for presentations and trainings on ethical and legal issues around sensitive data. In particular, the DMS group offered a webinar in September on data sharing in the light of the new data protection law, which attracted over 200 participants.

In 2023 the DMS group also started working on the swissuniversities funded project B5.2 on data stewardship (SwissDS-ENV), which will result in the development in 2024 of a Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS). In parallel to this project, the group intensified efforts to reach out to those involved in the provision of data management support (i.e., data stewards, support staff, data managers, librarians) with the provision of a train-the-trainer course in November on sharing data through a data repository, and the development of a new tool, DataGo, to be officially released in 2024. DataGo is a tool which helps assess whether or under what conditions data can be shared through a data repository.

Other contributions include:

- » A presentation on data sharing in the human and social sciences at the University of Bern (February)
- » A workshop on how to publish data on SWISSUbase at the University of Basel (May)
- » A workshop on managing and anonymising sensitive data as part of the NCCR Network Ventures Open Research Data, at the EPFL (May)
- » A presentation of FORS and what it has to offer as part of the Early Career Researcher Day of the Swiss Psychological Society, in Bern (June)
- » A workshop on FORS, its services and best open data practices given during the retreat of the Swiss Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training research group in Thun (June)
- » A keynote presentation on the legal framework of Open Research Data at the Pädagogische Hochschule St. Gallen (November)
- » A presentation on Open Data and data sharing given to researchers in education at the University of Geneva (December).

4. Infrastructure and Development INDEV

In October 2023, the unit underwent an evaluation mandated by the FORS Foundation Board. The evaluation of INDEV was a detailed assessment focusing on its strategic, operational, and developmental aspects. Key discussions included INDEV's overarching mission and strategic objectives, alongside the evaluation of the SWISSUbase platform and its services, as well as the Survey Management Tool (SMT). The panel also reviewed INDEV's involvement in the sensitive data initiative, secondary data usage, the European Question Bank, and its role in fostering cooperation within the broader FORS framework. This evaluation provided a comprehensive insight into INDEV's current achievements and future potential, underscoring its significance within FORS and the broader research infrastructure landscape. The evaluation was notably positive, reaffirming the unit's existing objectives, scope, and strategy. Going forward, INDEV will endeavour to follow the various recommendations of the Expert Evaluation Panel.

IT developments In 2023, the IT group diligently advanced the implementation of the SWISSUbase platform, achieving three successful releases. Concurrently, the JIRA Service Desk solution was deployed to streamline the management of support tickets. Furthermore, a tender process was undertaken to choose the most suitable infrastructure provider for the upcoming years.

A substantial portion of the software development efforts were concentrated on improving the Survey Management Tool (SMT) and laying the groundwork for the migration of the Swiss Household Panel application (SHP) into SMT, scheduled for Quarter 1 2024.

With the aim of optimising survey executions for the Data Collection and Analyses (DCA) group, and to manage addresses and mass-mailing communications, the IT group evaluated various Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platforms. Salesforce for non-profit organisations emerged as the optimal choice, and the corresponding implementation project was initiated, slated for a Quarter 1 2024 launch.

FORS is collaborating with CESSDA in the European Question Bank (EQB) initiative. As such, the IT group has supported the requirements gathering and analysed the technical integration between EQB and FORS's various data sources. In addition, the IT group participated in the DDI Developers' Hackathon and engaged in the ongoing activities of the DDI developers' group.

To align with the New Federal Act on Data Protection (nFADP), implemented on 1 September, FORS rigorously assessed and adapted its practices for personal data management and mailing communications. As a result, non-compliant third-party components on the websites were replaced.

The new website [Covid Generation](#) was launched and the development of the new version of the [SWISSUbase info website](#) started, scheduled for release in the second quarter of 2024. Concurrently, enhancements were deployed to the publication system of the Survey Methods: Insight from the Field (SMIF) [website](#).

As part of the office conversion into open spaces, the IT group took an active role in coordinating the transition. Standardised hot desks with docking stations were installed. Meeting rooms were equipped with TVs, projectors, videoconference systems and chargers. Furthermore, the computers of 12 new collaborators were prepared.

SWISSUbase

SWISSUbase is the archiving and sharing tool and service, developed in collaboration with the UNIL and the University of Zurich (UZH), with the mission to empower the Swiss scientific community to share and preserve research data for future reuse. It was officially launched for the entire Swiss social sciences community in December 2021. In September 2022, it was launched for the Swiss linguistics community and in 2023 for the UNIL. The current member institutions have formed a Simple Association as the legal form of the SWISSUbase Consortium.

In July 2023, the University of Neuchâtel joined the SWISSUbase Consortium and set up an institutional Data Service Unit to support the research community from its four faculties.

SWISSUbase currently has over 5 000 active users and features over 12 200 studies and over 940 datasets. In 2023, SWISSUbase counted 2 369 downloads of datasets with a restricted contract and 222 downloads of datasets with a creative commons license.

During 2023, extended functionalities were added to the SWISSUbase application, the user experience was improved and the data curation workflow was fine-tuned.

Major efforts have been undertaken to strengthen the services that are an integral part of the platform. In 2023, three SWISSUbase DSU Network Sessions were held to discuss and collaborate on several data curation topics. A wiki has also been set up to share extensive documentation of the application, the infrastructure, the services and the curation workflows.

The SWISSUbase team conducted workshops – partly in collaboration with FORS – for the partner institutions on how to set up DSUs and provided guidance on various relevant policies. Hands-on training sessions for the DSU members on the data curation processes on the SWISSUbase platform were held at the University of Neuchâtel, and the Data Tools and Services (DTS) group supported LaRS and the FORS Data Service in the creation of materials and guides for data depositors.

Some promotional activities were carried out: a webinar in collaboration with LaRS for the Swiss linguistics community and presentations at four faculties of UNIL. SWISSUbase has also created its own LinkedIn profile to regularly promote news, features, published datasets and events.

One of the priorities in 2023 was to clarify the branding and strategic positioning of SWISSUbase in the Swiss academic landscape. An external consultant was hired to conduct interviews with representatives from major stakeholders in order to assess the perception of and expectations from SWISSUbase. The objective was to find a tagline, a concise mission statement and a tone of voice that accurately represents SWISSUbase to the outside.

FORS also joined the project team for a Swiss Research Data Support Network within the framework of the action line B5.3 of swissuniversities' Open Science Programme. The DTS group will lead the work package "Technical infrastructure: internal communication & collaboration" in 2024.

During 2023, for the purpose of reaching potential new partners, online presentations and demonstrations were held at University of Bern, Valais University of Teacher Education, Vaud University of Teacher Education, University of Teacher Education in Special Needs, Graduate Institute of Geneva, HES-SO Data Stewardship Team and "Bibliothèque cantonale et universitaire" – Lausanne BCUL.

Collaboration with other data infrastructures

DaSCH

The work on the collaboration between FORS and [DaSCH](#) continued and a first draft of a Collaborating Partner Agreement was approved by the SWISSUbase Oversight Board and the DaSCH board. The agreement document has been sent for revision to the legal services of the SWISSUbase member institutions and will be signed in the beginning of 2024.

Connectome

FORS has continued to participate as a data provider in the SWITCH-led Connectome project in collaboration with DaSCH, OLOS, eXascale Infolab, SATW, SAGW, BCUL and SWITCH. The Research Data Connectome connects

and organises scientific (meta)data sustainably across disciplines to make it widely accessible, interoperable and valuable. Swiss research data that has been collected in domain or institutional silos will be easily connected via the Connectome Knowledge Graph. This graph contains valuable linked research information on research projects, research grants, datasets, publications, organisations and people. The metadata of data resources from the social sciences available in SWISSUbase are already harvested by the Open Data Navigator, enriched and linked to resources from other data providers to increase the discoverability of the data accessible on SWISSUbase.

The Oversight Board has agreed to become a member of Connectome in order to benefit from the Connectome API, which will make it possible to display linked resources (data and publications) directly within the SWISSUbase application.

I14Y

The I14Y interoperability platform is the Swiss Federal Statistical Office's national metadata catalogue with the main objective to make the administration's data collections publicly discoverable. It is planned that the I14Y will ingest SWISSUbase metadata for social science data in order to make it findable in the I14Y catalogue.

LiRI

LiRI, the Linguistic Research Infrastructure at the University of Zurich, provides a Virtual Research Infrastructure for the linguistics research community. Several meetings have been held between SWISSUbase and LiRI to align the data production and the data curation workflows as well as define the specifications of the API that will allow for the integration and automatic ingest of linguistic data into SWISSUbase. A test instance of the API has been deployed and the final API launch is planned for the second quarter of 2024.

5. Scientific collaborations

Host university

The University of Lausanne is the host of FORS, providing essential in-kind contributions including office space, IT, and human resources services for the more than 60 staff members at FORS. Additionally, the UNIL funds a joint research programme that supports the full or partial employment of 14 staff members across various levels, equivalent to 12 full-time equivalents (FTEs). Three FORS staff members also hold professorial positions in the SSP faculty. This collaborative programme is designed to elevate the standing of both FORS and the UNIL as leading institutions for social science research, both nationally and internationally. It focuses on enhancing quantitative skills and expertise within Switzerland, refining survey methodologies, fostering innovation in social science research and methodologies, and promoting dialogue among stakeholders in social science methods.

The programme's framework is outlined in a convention between FORS and the SSP faculty, overseen by a steering committee called the "Comité de pilotage". This committee, composed of three members from each institution, meets several times a year to guide the programme. Annually, this programme yields numerous publications and scientific papers derived from data produced at FORS. The visibility of these outputs has been enhanced through a [dedicated website](#), launched in 2022. The collaboration also includes jointly organised methodological and research meetings, fostering regular exchange on methodological issues between FORS, the UNIL and invited guests. SSP faculty members frequently participate in FORS events and vice versa. Additionally, the researchers involved in this programme contribute significantly to the methodological teaching within the SSP faculty.

To ensure the smooth operation of this collaboration, formal meetings between the FORS Directorate and the SSP Faculty Dean's Office occur biannually. The link to the UNIL's Rectorate is further strengthened by the participation of a Rectorate member, who serves as the President of the FORS Foundation Board.

Policy dialogue and national coordination

FORS has actively contributed to various national policy-related initiatives and projects.

In 2022, the joint [Position Paper: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Infrastructures in Switzerland](#) was published by various organisations and individuals. This paper aims to stimulate discussion on the state of social sciences and humanities research infrastructures in Switzerland, the Swiss research infrastructure roadmap process, and potential improvements in funding and governance models in the Social Sciences and Humanities. In January 2023, a

stakeholder event, co-organised by FORS, brought together representatives from national and European SSH infrastructures to discuss follow-up activities, learn from international experiences, and identify cross-disciplinary topics. Key highlights included the need for a national infrastructure roadmap process better suited to SSH needs, a call for a landscape analysis, and an emphasis on strengthening collaboration among existing research infrastructures for creating synergies and interoperability.

In autumn 2023, several organisations agreed to establish “SSHOC-CH” (Social Sciences & Humanities Open Cluster – Switzerland), addressing the lack of active exchange among existing infrastructures. SSHOC-CH aims to foster collaborations, find synergies, and build an ecosystem of national infrastructures supporting scholars in social sciences and humanities, in line with Open Science and FAIR principles. A coordination group, including FORS, was formed, and the formal establishment is set for April 2024.

Another significant area is the **secondary use of existing data for research**. Access to and linkage of data from public and private sectors are crucial for the research community. FORS is involved in the development of linkhub.ch, a collaborative initiative for policy dialogue and infrastructure development around data access. Partners are the Swiss network on Fiscal Federalism, the Centre of Expertise LIVES, NCCR on the move, the SwissRDL, TREE and linkhub.ch which also coordinates on this topic with the Swiss Federal Statistical Office (SFSO).

The importance of the above topic was underscored by the **Swiss national parliament’s approval of a motion on ‘Secondary Use of Data’** in 2022, aiming to create a framework law for strategically relevant data use infrastructures. FORS, in collaboration with Interpharma under the Swiss Data Alliance, contributed an input paper “Demands on a framework law from the perspective of social science and pharmaceutical research” in 2023. FORS also participated in meetings of the Federal Chancellery, the Federal Department of Justice and the expert cycle of the Swiss Data Alliance on this topic in order to provide inputs. Related to these developments are the efforts to advance conceptually how to give secured access to sensitive data in the future so such data can be used better in research (see [Chapter 3. Data and research information services DARISS](#)).

Furthermore, FORS has joined the **Swiss National Open Research Data (ORD) Strategy Council’s Sounding Board of Service Providers**, or StraCo, tasked with developing a unified vision for Switzerland’s future ORD framework. The Sounding Board facilitates StraCo’s decision-making by providing expertise and assembling specialists from service providers involved in ORD services. A key task for the Sounding Board, initiated in autumn 2023, is to compile a report on technical interoperability, reusing research infrastructures, user access and data archiving. The report is to be delivered in 2024.

National research projects

FORS collaborators contributed to a number of different and separately funded research projects:

- » “Swiss Direct Democracy in the 21st Century”, Daniel Kübler (UZH/ZDA Aarau), Anke Tresch (FORS/UNIL), Marc Bühlmann (UniBe), Denise Traber (UniBAS), Lionel Marquis (UNIL), funded by Swiss National Science Foundation, 2023–2027.
- » “The making of political careers: evaluating the role of trade unions in the pathway of workers to elected office in Switzerland”, Line Rennwald (FORS) and André Mach (UNIL), funded by the Swiss Social Archives, Research Ellen Rifkin Hill, 2022–2024.
- » “The Covid Generation: Identifying risks and protective factors for young people’s pathways through the COVID-19 pandemic in Switzerland”, Stephanie Steinmetz (UNIL), Leen Vandecasteele (UNIL), Núria Sánchez-Mira (UNIL), Dawid Gondek (FORS), Teuta Mehmeti (UniNe), funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (NRP80 Covid-19 in Society), 2023–2026.
- » “Swiss Data Stewardship Environment: Profile – Training – Network (SwissDS-ENV)”, Gérard Bagnoud (UNIL, lead), Alexandra Stam (FORS) as well as different other higher education institutions, funded by swissuniversities, 2023–2024.
- » “Explaining the Reluctance of Swiss-German Parents in the Uptake of Allday Childcare and Schooling”, Laura Bernardi (UNIL) and Marieke Heers (FORS), funded by the Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences (SAGW/ASSH), 2022–2023.
- » “Parental Investment in Children’s Education in Migrant Families in Switzerland (PICE)”, Sandra Hupka Brunner (UniBe) and Marieke Heers (FORS), funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), 2019–2023.
- » “Populism and Conspiracy in the COVID-19 Pandemic and beyond: Linking Discourses and Attitudes in Four European Countries”, Oscar Mazzoleni, Klaudia Koxha, Emilia Meini (UNIL) & Reinhard Heinisch, Martin Dolezal, Diana Hofmann (University of Salzburg), funded by the Swiss national Science foundation and the Austrian Science Fund, 2023–2026.
- » “Healthy Ageing in the Face of Death: Preferences, Communication, Knowledge and Behaviors Regarding End of Life and End-of-life Planning Among Older Adults in Switzerland”, SHARE, Sarah Vilpert (UNIL), Clément Meier (UNIL), funded by the Swiss national Science foundation, 2021–2023.
- » “A scoping study to assess demand for and feasibility of establishing a Swiss Time Use Survey for the social sciences”, Caroline Roberts (UNIL) and Oliver Lipps (FORS), funded by LIVES Seed Funding and the SSP Faculty, 2023.

For the complete listing of national research projects led in particular by the DCA group, consult [Chapter 7. Data collection and analysis DCA](#).

International collaborations

At the international level, FORS continued its considerable involvement in the establishment and development of European and international research infrastructure. These activities are important to connect Switzerland to European and international research infrastructures and to increase the international visibility of Swiss social sciences. FORS hosts the Secretariat of three international cooperation projects, ISSP, CSS and CNES.

- » **International Social Survey Programme (ISSP).** Switzerland has taken over the Secretariat for ISSP from GESIS in autumn 2021. The Secretariat is appointed for a period of three years (renewable once) and takes over all organisational and coordinating tasks of this survey programme, which has around 50 members from all over the world and covers many cultures and languages. The detailed activity report can be read in [Chapter 2.2 MOSAICH/ ISSP>ISSP International](#).
- » **Comparative Candidate Survey (CCS).** FORS has also had a coordinating role for CCS for several years. FORS ensures the integration and harmonisation of the CCS data, and the data are published via SWISSUbase.
- » **The Consortium of National Election Studies (CNES)** is the network of scientific national election studies that conduct voter surveys for national general elections. CNES was founded in 2022 and FORS was awarded the hosting of the CNES Secretariat for a period of four years. CNES promotes the exchange of data, knowledge and standards on national elections and election studies to improve the understanding of electoral behaviour and electoral democracies through national and comparative election research.
- » FORS continues to be involved in setting up the **Monitoring Electoral Democracies (MEDem)** project, which aims to link various comparative political science projects (including CCS and CNES) and aims for ESFRI roadmap status in 2026. FORS plans to host the “Centre for Survey Data” as part of the MEDem consortium. Work is underway to establish the MEDem consortium with Austria as the host country.
- » FORS is collaborating with the UNIL for Switzerland and researchers in Switzerland to become part of the **Gender and Generations Programme (GGP)**, which made it on the ESFRI roadmap in 2022, and to establish the national data collection node. Switzerland included the participation in GGP in the new national roadmap for research infrastructures published in 2023 after a positive evaluation by the SNSF. A discussion on how to fund GGP continued in 2023; a sustainable funding is yet to be found.
- » The **SERI** has taken over the official representation of Switzerland in the social science **European Research Infrastructure Consortia (ERICs)** **CESSDA**, **ESS** and **SHARE** in 2023 after this representation having been delegated to FORS for many years. Switzerland created the legal conditions to become full member of ERICs in 2022 and CESSDA was among the

first ERICs where Switzerland applied for full membership, which was also granted. For the time being, Switzerland remains an observer in SHARE and ESS but may in the near future apply for full membership in these ERICs as well. FORS staff nevertheless remain active and taking part in the coordinating bodies of all the three organisations.

- » FORS is responsible for representing Switzerland in various other European and International projects. FORS staff represent Switzerland in the ISSP Annual meeting, which decides on modules for the coming period. FORS collaborators represent Switzerland in governing bodies of various political science networks, such as the Comparative Study of Electoral System (CSES) and the Comparative Candidate Survey (CCS) and the European Value Study (EVS).
- » **CESSDA Mentorship Programme:** in 2023, the FORS archive team was responsible for the CESSDA Mentorship Programme. The concept developed in 2022 was implemented. This innovative programme facilitated collaborative experiences. Moreover, within a collaborative mentorship, the FORS archive team, in conjunction with colleagues from CESSDA Service Providers in Croatia, Finland, Norway, and Sweden, actively contributed to the development of CESSDA recommendations concerning data citation. These practical recommendations specifically address three types of stakeholders: 1) authors, 2) journals and publishers, and 3) data archives and repositories.
- » **CESSDA Resource Directory:** the FORS archive team continued to develop the CESSDA Resource Directory, which is a curated inventory of existing resources to support activities of data archive professionals. In 2023, the work consisted of relocating the directory from the Zotero platform to the CESSDA website to enhance its accessibility and visibility within the community of data archive professionals.
- » **RiTrainPlus:** the FORS archive team completed a third year as task leader in the European RiTrainPlus project. The purpose of the task is to design, develop, and implement an accredited training course for research infrastructure managers on data management and data policy. During the summer of 2023, an important milestone was reached by successfully conducting the first of two pilot courses. This achievement involved the active involvement of 25 international professionals and generated valuable feedback. This feedback will be taken into account for the second pilot course, scheduled for delivery in 2024.
- » **eRImote:** FORS continued to be involved in the European project eRImote, which aims to enhance infrastructures in Europe for remote access to research data. Within the project FORS is involved in a work package that aims to create and maintain a database of resources on remote access for research infrastructures.

6. Methodological Research

While engaged in essential tasks, such as designing questionnaires and surveys, collecting, processing and documenting data or writing proposals, members of FORS and affiliated researchers contributed actively to the academic community. They published five articles in peer-reviewed journals and delivered ten presentations at conferences, focusing on methodological research. As usual, FORS continued working on topics related to its methodological research programme, in collaboration with members of the UNIL SSP faculty and researchers beyond. Aims of this research include investigating effects from changing survey characteristics such as modes and incentives, testing design features to increase participation, searching for alternative or complementary data sources and survey techniques, and measurement and equivalence issues. The main surveys used for methodological research included the SHP IV pilot and the SHP IV refreshment, the EVS, MOSAiCH/ISSP, the Selects panel, and the FORS Connect panel.

Changing survey modes

The SHP team finalised the project about the risk of increasing item nonresponse when changing to the web mode using data from the two-wave SHP IV experimental pilot. In the household questionnaire people were randomised to either keep the telephone mode or to change to the web mode after the first wave, allowing a difference-in-difference analysis. When changing to the web, “don’t know” answers increased moderately, while item refusals increased substantially. A paper was published in the *Journal of Official Statistics* and findings which added results from the individual questionnaire from the first wave, published in 2022 in the journal *Field Methods*, presented at the 15th Panelworkshop der Panelsurveys im deutschsprachigen Raum 2023 in Berlin.

At the same workshop, results from matching income from different registers with the SHP IV pilot sample were presented. Matching income has many research potentials: first, it enables the evaluation of different selection effects (nonresponse, attrition, item nonresponse) depending on income. Second, reporting errors can be assessed. Third, substituting reported income with income from registers to reduce survey burden can be assessed. The talk discussed issues of register data access, data protection, data preparation, respondent consent to match income data, and questions about conceptual differences between reported income and income from registers. Results showed that selection effects were different in the first and the second wave: people living from unemployment benefits or subsidies were underrepresented in the first wave, and retired people overrepresented. Attrition and item nonresponse were highest among people with stronger income changes.

Further research based on data from the SHP IV pilot compared the response rates and sample composition of the SHP IV pilot (web assigned at random) with the first two waves of the SHP IV refreshment (web assigned to households without landline). A significant driver of differences in response rates and sample composition between the web group and the telephone group in the SHP IV refreshment results from the assignment of households without landline to the web group. A book chapter presented an overview of the challenges involved in mixing modes in longitudinal surveys, including a synthesis of findings from the SHP IV pilot and the LIVES-FORS mixed mode experiment. It particularly devotes attention to the implications of mode effects for the study of vulnerable groups in life course research. A presentation with updates from the third wave of the SHP IV refreshment has been submitted for the 16th Panelworkshop der Panelsurveys im deutschsprachigen Raum 2024 in Nuremberg.

The effects of changing mode from an interviewer-based to the web mode from the SHP IV pilot will in addition be presented at the ESS conference 2024 in Lisbon. These findings will be showcased alongside results from mode experiments conducted in previous FORS surveys.

When changing mode, repeated cross-sectional surveys face the challenge of comparability. Using experimental data from the EVS in Switzerland in 2017, the international team compared substantial variables across four designs of push-to-web and a face-to-face survey. An encompassing framework for investigating possible representation biases and their effects on results from real-life applications was used, also considering different levels of complexity of analyses that users might apply. Preliminary results, presented at the ESRA 2023 conference, suggest that face-to-face and push-to-web surveys are generally comparable; however, the likelihood of bias depends on the analysis type applied.

Changing survey incentives

Theoretical considerations suggest that motivated respondents still participate in panel surveys if incentives are lowered, while for less motivated respondents the incentive is more important. To investigate effects from unequal cuts on incentives, the Selects team carried out two incentive experiments in Wave 5 and Wave 6 of the Selects Panel Survey. In Wave 5, respondents with a high participation propensity were randomised into a group continuing to receive an unconditional incentive of 10 CHF, and a lottery (5 x 300 CHF) group. Response rates of the unconditional incentive group were only three percentage points higher than those of the lottery group, with only small differences regarding sample composition. In Wave 6, respondents with a low participation propensity were randomised into a group continuing to receive a conditional 20 CHF incentive, and a lottery group. The results showed an eight percentage-point

drop in response rates in the lottery condition. While this result would speak in favour of cutting on incentives for high-participation propensity respondents, this group still shows a 3%-point higher response rate in Wave 6 for the higher incentive group from Wave 5, although all received the same lottery incentive in Wave 6. These “carry-over” effects show that cuts on incentives must be planned very carefully, in particular in a longitudinal context. The experiments were published as two research notes in the journal *Survey Methods: Insights from the Field* and were also presented at the ESRA 2023 conference.

While still investigating the possibility of reducing incentive costs, the SHP team implemented an experiment among a subsample of 500 households of the SHP_II, a refreshment sample that started in 2004. For the 2023 wave of data collection, the unconditional incentive was lowered from 20 CHF to 10 CHF. The SHP team anticipates answers to questions regarding increased panel attrition. If such attrition is observed, they will explore selection factors considering demographics, past participation patterns, and characteristics associated with underrepresentation in surveys, such as political interest and low levels of trust. First results of this experiment will be presented at the Panel Survey Methods Workshop (Utrecht 2024).

Continuing research about substituting postal cheques with other incentives, using digital money is straightforward and can be easily implemented in case of electronic invitations. In Switzerland, a widely used national electronic payment app called TWINT allows receipt of money. The international team implemented incentive experiments in the 2020 and 2022 push-to-web MOSAiCH survey including TWINT as an unconditional incentive. Results showed that that the digital incentive did not increase survey participation nor speed-up fieldwork. In addition, there were no significant differences in demographic or socioeconomic characteristics, trust, attitudes towards digital technology, or other attitudes. However, requesting the digital money rose with increased usage of the app and speeded up the field. Younger individuals and respondents with higher levels of education were more likely to request the digital incentive. This allowed the conclusion that resistance to digital money was not related to general mistrust or technology aversion but rather to the perception that digital money lacks the immediacy of cash. Using the app to request the money, however, is related to skills and attitudes towards technology and money. These results were presented at the ESRA 2023 conference.

Testing design features to increase participation

The FORS Connect recruitment survey included several experiments to test the effects of different design features on willingness to participate and join the panel. These included: 1) whether the sample member was invited to a regular panel vs. a smartphone panel; 2) whether they were invited to the panel “up-front” vs. at the end of the substantive survey; 3) whether they were given a deadline

with an expiring incentive vs. no deadline or incentive change; 4) whether they received detailed data privacy information vs. a simplified privacy notice vs. none. The results of these experiments highlighted that recruiting people upfront for a panel survey is more effective than inviting them to be recontacted at the end of the questionnaire. By contrast, including data protection information with the survey invitation has a detrimental impact on participation. Nevertheless, those who do participate report a better understanding of how their data will be stored, processed, and analysed. Wave 1 included an extension of the data privacy information experiment conducted in the recruitment survey to allow a more detailed analysis of moderators of the effects of information on participation – in particular, data privacy concerns and digital trusts. The results of these experiments were presented at the ESRA 2023 conference.

Searching for alternative/complementary data sources and survey techniques

Although researchers increasingly use social media – specifically X (formerly Twitter) data – to analyse social phenomena, few studies have investigated the questions of who uses X, who posts on X, and how that relates to the general population. In a presentation at the ESRA 2023 conference, the question of how X and other social media users represent the general population was addressed. Using data from MOSAiCH 2021, potential representation bias was analysed focusing on health and political topics. The results suggest that only 8% of the population has an X account, with only 4% posting occasionally and merely 1% posting regularly. People who post on X are not representative of the population regarding socio-demographics. Furthermore, results using the subpopulation of X posters or frequent posters sometimes differ dramatically.

Research on the Data Donations experiment continued within the framework of Wave 2 of the FORS Connect panel. Participants were invited to upload data about their smartphone use, specifically from the Digital Wellbeing/Screen Time function. The experiment compared alternative ways of providing this information (screenshots, videos and self-reports) and different incentives. Being one of only a few attempts to collect data donation in the context of an online survey, the data provided a rich resource for studying influences on public engagement in smartphone research and data quality.

The Selects-Civique smartphone study 2019 conducted in collaboration with UNIL, the Idiap Research Institute, and EPFL explored the potential and barriers of app-based data collection in social surveys, allowing comparisons between a browser-based and an app-based survey design. While three papers were published in 2022, a fourth paper comparing data from the main Selects Panel survey with alternative mobile optimisation strategies with respect to participation and fieldwork progression is currently under revision for resubmission to the journal *Survey Research Methods*.

Building on these works, new data has been collected within the context of the FORS Connect experimental panel. The aim is to further investigate sources of resistance to participating in mobile data collection tasks via a smartphone and to test ways of mitigating concerns and promoting participation, for example. The Selects-Civique research continues to exploit administrative data from the register-based sample frame, combined with data from MOSAiCH to investigate nonresponse and noncoverage biases in mobile web surveys. These analyses will be extended in 2024 using data from the SFSO's Omnibus surveys on internet use. New, nationally representative data on the role of privacy concerns, digital trust and willingness to take part in digital data collection will also be collected in 2024 in the context of the MOSAiCH-ISSP survey on the topic of Digital Societies. This will enable us to expand research to other language regions in Switzerland and make population inferences regarding the state of digital trust and its impact on the willingness to participate in digital surveys.

Measurement and Equivalence issues

Election studies are often challenged by the overrepresentation of politically interested individuals among respondents, leading to a bias in key survey estimates related to political behaviour, especially voter turnout and party preference. To address this issue, members of the political surveys group conducted a flyer experiment, manipulating the topic salience of the information flyer. The aim of the experiment was to assess whether reducing the salience of the survey topic (parties and elections) helps in recruiting respondents with lower levels of political interest. This experiment was integrated into Wave 1 of the Selects 2023 panel survey: German-speaking sample members were randomly assigned to one of three flyers: the first group received a flyer emphasising the survey topic (survey about federal elections), the second group received a flyer with moderate topic salience, and the third group received a flyer with a neutral presentation of the survey topic (e.g., survey about important socio-political debates). Preliminary analyses indicated that the manipulation of survey topic salience was effective in Wave 1, contributing to the recruitment of more non-voters (though not statistically significant) and respondents sympathising with the far-right. However, in Wave 2, response rates were significantly lower in the neutral flyer group. These findings suggest that while framing a political survey in a more generic and less politically explicit manner may enhance representativeness to some extent, it is not a panacea for mitigating turnout bias arising from self-selection.

A team of researchers at FORS and the SSP has studied equivalence in web and paper modes comparing coverage, non-response and measurement in the push-to-web ISSP 2020 survey from Switzerland and Finland. Register data from both countries allowed comparing sample representativeness in terms of key sociodemographic indicators and a few module-specific variables, notably regarding environmental attitudes, concerns and behaviours. Overall, the analyses suggest that, while different respondent groups opt for different

modes, the mixed-mode design does not introduce additional biases in the measurement of substantial variables once the selection effect into mode is controlled for. A push-to-web design is thereby likely to improve data quality, as long as researchers properly control for the unequal probability of mode selection and a paper mode is offered in parallel. In 2023, the research was presented at the 76th WAPOR conference and the ESRA conference.

An additional study assessed the use of educational levels in scientific publications, using data from the MOSAiCH-ISSP. First, the education variable implies several implicit concepts, including professional training, prestige, cognitive development, cultural knowledge, and lifestyle. In addition, a comparative evaluation of various methods for measuring educational levels was conducted, analysing both the reliability and validity of these methods – assessing their alignment with the underlying concepts they aim to represent. A conference on this topic was organised, and a publication is in preparation.

Finally, the international survey team investigated survey response theory aiming to carry out a follow-up survey targeting non-respondents in a survey focusing on the utilisation of digital technologies (MOSAiCH 2024). The principal objectives of this nonresponse study will be to evaluate the overall quality of the MOSAiCH survey and to provide insights into unit nonresponse research in web surveys.

In 2023 a team of researchers at FORS and the UNIL have started to work on the topic of how to best measure sex, gender and sexual orientation in population surveys. Data was collected via MOSAiCH 2022 and the FORS Connect panel. First research results were presented in 2023 at the ESRA conference and a workshop in the Netherlands dedicated to this topic. Moreover, the team has started working on a FORS guide on this subject, scheduled to be published in 2024.

New initiatives

In addition, 2023 saw the launch of several new initiatives. A first one funded by the LIVES Seed Money, revolves around the creation of a novel survey on time use in Switzerland. A key aspect of this survey is the utilisation of a smartphone application for data collection. Insights gained from prior analyses, as well as upcoming ones that incorporate new data from MOSAiCH 2024 regarding obstacles to participation in app-based surveys, play a crucial role in shaping this initiative. The findings will inform the design of the Time Use Survey, specifically in implementing response enhancement methods. Additionally, preparations for a pilot study to evaluate an app-based data collection tool tailored for time use research are currently in progress. In a second initiative, members from the international survey team are collaborating with the International Partnership on Automatic Occupation Coding, to assess the quality of the ISCO occupation data.

7. Data collection and analysis DCA

In addition to conducting FORS surveys internally, the DCA offers services for the whole survey lifecycle to the research community as well as for academic institutions, the public sector, and non-profit organisations. These services have several goals. They, of course, provide valuable additional sources of funding for FORS. More importantly, they serve as a way of training and maintaining the personnel in key competencies necessary for conducting reference quality surveys, as well as providing opportunities for continuous learning in new methods through innovative new mandates and methodological experiments.

When working with researchers, the DCA provides a partner focused on collaborating in finding the best solution and facilitating optimal conditions for conducting a research project. The DCA actively participates in the definition of the methodology and the revision of the survey instruments. With institutional clients, the work of the DCA is an opportunity to create bridges between academic and applied research answering specific questions, while creating demand for high-quality applied research with sound scientific methodology.

Below is a description of all the projects conducted by the DCA in 2023:

Panel Lémanique, Laboratory of Urban Sociology, EPFL 2022–2026

The DCA was mandated by the EPFL to conduct a panel survey aiming at observing changes in the habits of the inhabitants of the Lake Geneva cross-border region in terms of mobility, housing, energy and resource consumption. The project is mainly financed by the Cantons of Vaud and Geneva. In April, approximately 7 100 persons were contacted for a GPS tracking survey, conducted with the application developed by Motiontag. Of the people invited, 32.5% completed at least 21 days of tracking. For the second main wave of the survey conducted in the summer, about 11 100 people who had responded to the first wave were contacted in Switzerland and France and the response rate was about 47%. Finally, in September, an additional wave was conducted with about 5 200 respondents living in the canton of Vaud, focusing on the summer leisure activities.

Personality and Civic Engagement Across the Adult Lifespan (Percival) – Department of Psychology, University of Zurich 2022–2024

Percival is a social psychology study commissioned by researchers from the University of Zurich. The study aims to investigate the development of personality and civic engagement among the Swiss population over time. In civic engagement, there are individual differences in the nature and extent of personal engagement. This research project aims to find out which personality traits are particularly relevant for the emergence of civic engagement. FORS

is tasked with the data collection of five survey waves between September 2022 and November 2024. Two waves took place in 2023, with about 4 200 respondents contacted in each and yielding a response rate of 59% and 61.5% respectively for Waves 2 and 3.

Actor Survey on Artificial Intelligence Policy Across Countries, University of Lausanne and University of Geneva 2022–2023

In collaboration with the UNIL and the University of Geneva, the DCA conducted an actor survey across several countries. The aim was to understand and compare the way in which the subject of artificial intelligence is treated politically by public policy actors in multiple fields (banking and finance, social welfare, and health). Experts in artificial intelligence were also asked to participate. The mandate included a review of the questionnaire, testing, programming, coordination and follow-up of the fieldwork and transmission of data. The survey was launched in Switzerland, France and Germany in 2022. The DCA has also been mandated to repeat the survey in the USA in 2023.

Swiss Direct Democracy in the 21st Century (SDD-21) 2023–2027

The project aims at contributing to a better understanding of citizens' opinion formation and vote decisions in direct democracy, particularly in Switzerland but also in general. To that end, the project examines the role of four crucial determinants that have been neglected in the scholarly literature so far: advertisements and digital media used in voting campaigns, and citizens' moral attitudes and political sophistication. It is a collaboration between the political science departments of the Universities of Zurich, Bern, Lausanne, and Basel, and FORS. Two waves were conducted in 2023. In the first wave, conducted after the June popular vote, about 10 700 persons were invited to respond to the survey, of which 23% responded. A second wave was conducted right after the 2023 Federal Elections, where 1 800 respondents to the first wave were contacted and about 58% responded.

Swiss Eating Study, University of Zurich 2023–2027

The first aim of the project is to generate a comprehensive model of personal and contextual determinants of meat reduction. The second is to test an intervention to conduct long-term follow-ups to determine how well treatment-induced meat reduction is sustained, and to identify variables that can predict which people will maintain a meat-reduced diet and who will not. FORS started work on the design of the study, the questionnaire, and its implementation of the survey in 2023. In total, five waves are planned starting 2024, as well as two bursts in which people are asked about their eating habits for 21 days.

Survey on Work and Study Climate, University of Lausanne 2022–2023

The DCA, with the collaboration of the university's Rectorate and the Equal Opportunities Office, conducted a survey on the work and study climate at the UNIL measuring the well-being of personnel and students but also experiences of discrimination and psychological or sexual harassment. The DCA analysed and reported the results in a public report widely covered by the media. The DCA was also interviewed for an article in the media and FORS was cited in numerous press articles as well as in the national TV news. Given the large amount of data of interest to be analysed in this project, the DCA also started working on a larger, more technical report that was finished in 2023. The DCA took advantage of the opportunity to develop a new tool for producing reports and automating tables and graphs production using R. The interest raised by the project also prompted the UNIL to repeat the survey in 2024.

Annual Mobility Survey, University of Lausanne 2018–

After a break in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19, FORS has been conducting the annual survey on mobility among the students and staff of the UNIL again since 2022. The survey analyses commuting habits and their evolution across time. Approximately 20 200 persons were contacted in 2023, out of which 18.4% responded, a slight decrease from the previous year. The thematic focus was on the return from the pandemic and cycling as a mode of transport.

Biennial Mobility Survey, EPFL 2019–

The EPFL has conducted a mobility survey of its students and employees since 2003. The DCA was first mandated to take over this survey in 2019 and the survey was conducted again in 2021 and 2023. The questionnaire was revised from the 2021 edition and the data was integrated into the cumulative dataset.

Database and Survey on Past Doctoral Students, Graduate Campus, University of Lausanne 2021–

The DCA was mandated in 2021 by the Graduate Campus of the UNIL to conduct the annual Graduate Campus PhD survey among the former PhD students who received their degree three years prior. The survey among former doctoral students who finished in 2022 was conducted in autumn - winter 2023. Around 330 people were contacted, and the response rate was approximately 32%. The data will be prepared and added to the cumulative file in early 2024.

Sustainable Development Goals Contribution Survey, SNSF 2023

The project was mandated by the SNSF, aiming to determine the adequacy and relevance of a questionnaire designed to assess the contribution of SNSF grants (research content and findings) to the UN sustainability goals. After the initial development phase by the SNSF and revisions made in collaboration

with FORS, the questionnaire was cognitively pretested between March 2023 and April 2023, before being distributed in May 2023. Of the 850 researchers contacted for the survey, about 39% responded. A technical report, including detailed insights about the completion of the questionnaire, was finalised in October 2023.

Survey on Catering at the University of Lausanne – 2023

FORS has conducted four such surveys since 2013. The survey conducted in 2023 was based on the surveys of previous years to allow for comparisons over time, but also included many new elements developed in collaboration with the Commission de l'alimentation of the UNIL. The survey started at the end of October 2023. Around 19 500 respondents were contacted, of which about 31% responded fully.

Swiss Reproducibility Network Survey, University of Zurich

FORS collaborated on the implementation of a survey conducted among researchers to better understand their opinions and needs regarding questions of reproducibility and open data. The survey started late 2023 and will finish early 2024.

Health and well-being of hospital staff: reducing red tape to fight attrition, HES-SO Valais-Wallis

This project is based on the premise that reducing bureaucracy in hospitals could prevent burnout and foster the meaning of work, work engagement and, consequently, the intent to stay (ITS) in the organisation. This use-inspired research project aims both to generate scientific knowledge and to contribute to solutions for the current staff shortage in hospitals. The role of FORS was to accompany the client in preparing submission to the SNSF, in particular in terms of the methodological design of the project, the methods of collection, the definition of the questionnaires, as well as the statistical analyses planned.

8. Outreach, output and events

8.1 Publications

In an ongoing commitment to effective knowledge dissemination, the publication of research findings serves as a pivotal communication platform. Through publishing scientific data FORS promotes wider data sharing and reuse, as well as credit those that share their data. All of the publications and presentations can be consulted here: forscenter.ch/publications/scientific-publications/.

Presented below is a compilation of FORS's public online platforms, series and journals, all strategically promoted through diverse communication channels, including but not limited to social media, distribution lists and newsletters.

The FORS Guides to Survey Methods and Data Management

The aim of the peer-reviewed open access series FORS Guides to Survey Methods and Data Management, initiated in 2019, is a knowledge transfer within and outside of FORS in the domain of survey methods and data management. The FORS Guides are specifically targeted to the Swiss research community and researchers working with Swiss data. 2023 marked the publication of the 20th FORS Guide. A special FORS Lunch Seminar was organised to celebrate this occasion. The authors of the 2023 series had the chance to present their FORS Guides. In 2023, four new FORS Guides were published: one in the field of survey methods on the measurement of psychological constructs and three in the domains of data management on data citation, qualitative data anonymisation of interview transcripts and data sharing in the social sciences. The FORS Guides are available online at www.forscenter.ch/fors-guides.

Social Change in Switzerland

The online publication series "Social Change in Switzerland," which is bilingual in French and German, is a collaborative effort between FORS and the LIVES Centre, the Swiss Competence Centre for Research on Life Course and Vulnerabilities. Its objective is to analyse transformations in various aspects such as employment, family, income, mobility, voting, and gender within the Swiss context.

As last year, the series published four contributions in 2023. The topics of the articles were: The regularisation of undocumented immigrants in the canton of Geneva, the educational mobility of women and men in Switzerland, the evolution of party affiliations in Switzerland between 1971 and 2019, and the reputation of professions in Switzerland. All publications, press and media releases can be consulted on the journal's [dedicated webpage](#). The number

of single page views on the journal website increased to 24 820, which is a percentage rise of 14.15% compared to the previous year (21 672 page views in 2022). The articles viewed the most were, like in the previous year, one on income inequality between men and women (published in 2019) followed by an article on religion and secularization in Switzerland between 1930 and 2020 (published in 2021). Most visits again came from Switzerland, followed by the United States, Germany, France, and Austria.

DeFacto

[DeFacto](#) is now 8 years old. The new governance of DeFacto, adopted at the Swiss Political Science Association (SVPW/ASSP) General Conference, was implemented in 2023. Starting from 2024, DeFacto will be integrated into the SVPW/ASSP, which will assume financial and administrative responsibility for it. The platform will continue to be funded by contributions from various institutes. In 2023, the number of articles published rose again, surpassing the previous year's record, to almost 178. Additionally, since October 2023, contributions can also be published in English. In the same year, a new series of "People in PolSci" interviews was launched. As part of this series, researchers are interviewed on topical issues in electoral research during the Swiss federal elections. DeFacto was able to raise its profile in 2023, thanks to several public events and its presence on the LinkedIn platform. Most visits came from Switzerland, followed by the United States, Germany, France, and Italy.

Survey Methods: Insights from the Field

The peer-reviewed international online journal [Survey Methods: Insights from the Field](#) (SMIF) published a total of 17 articles (compared to nine articles in 2022) including one special issue on the topic of Food Acquisition Research and Methods. In 2023 the journal has transitioned to a structured format, now organising articles into volumes and issues. Starting in 2024, authors will further have the opportunity to showcase their work by publishing articles "Online First" before allocating their article to a volume and issue, offering thus the advantage of a swift dissemination and early visibility for their research. The most consulted articles online were: "Using Facebook and Instagram to recruit web survey participants", "Why should we put weight on weighting" and "How to reach hard-to-reach older people for research". Most visits came from the United States, followed by Germany, the United Kingdom and Switzerland.

8.2 Events

The following events, organised by FORS, took place either in person or online.

Webinar “Introduction to LaRS- SWISSUbase for the linguistics community”

This online event took place on 14 February. During this virtual session, attendees were introduced to the SWISSUbase archiving platform tailored for the linguistics community. The presentation highlighted the various services available to researchers, encompassing data curation, archiving, and the publication of linguistic data. The event featured a live demonstration of the platform and allowed ample time for participants to pose questions and receive answers.

Paving the way for the future to support the SSH infrastructures in Switzerland

Following the inaugural event on 31 May 2022, and the subsequent release of the position paper in November 2022, the coordination group of this initiative extends an invitation to members of the Swiss SSH scientific community interested in research infrastructures for a second event on 18 January 2023.

The meeting aimed to achieve three primary objectives. First, it sought to raise awareness regarding the significance of research infrastructure in the SSH domain and provided insights into the prioritisation and funding mechanisms, both at the national level and within the ESFRI roadmap process. Second, the event intended to share international experiences on successful collaborations between projects and infrastructures, drawing from examples in other countries and at the European level. Third, the gathering served as a platform for potential new Swiss RIs in the SSH domain, facilitating discussions on the needs of the SSH community and strategies to foster synergies and collaborative efforts.

To attain these objectives, four distinguished speakers from abroad shared their experiences of successful collaboration and clustering in other countries and at the European level. Additionally, the floor was open to several Swiss projects of RIs in the SSH field, providing an opportunity to reflect on user needs and explore potential synergies. The day concluded with a Round Table featuring an open discussion, where invited guests from the SNSF, the SERI, swissuniversities, the SAGW, and all members of the audience could express their perspectives.

12th International Conference of Panel Data Users in Switzerland

The Swiss Household Panel team organised a conference at the University of Lausanne on 14–15 June, featuring plenary sessions on the feminist strike in 2023 and the Comparative Panel File. The event included parallel sessions covering diverse topics and drew contributions from various longitudinal studies, both in Switzerland and abroad. With 34 presentations and around 60 participants, the conference received positive feedback.

Symposium: “Data sharing in the light of the new Swiss Data Protection Law”

This online symposium, which took place on 12 September 2023, aimed to address concerns related to the new Federal Act on Data Protection ([nFADP](#)) effective in Switzerland since 1 September 2023.

Participants were encouraged to seek answers to questions such as understanding the implications of data protection laws for their research, navigating the legal requirements for sharing data and research materials, and identifying secure platforms for sharing. The questions and answers raised during the symposium can be consulted on the [symposium’s webpage](#).

Marking the 15th anniversary of FORS - The Role of FORS in Advancing Social Science Research

The 15th anniversary celebration of FORS took place at the UNIL on 16 November 2023. It was a momentous event marked by the presence of many previous and current contributors to FORS and discussions centring on FORS’s remarkable journey and its future trajectory. Estelle Doudet, President of FORS, emphasised its role in advancing social science research through interdisciplinary collaboration. A round table, featuring key figures in social science, discussed FORS’s contributions, challenges in securing long-term funding, and its evolving role in an interdisciplinary landscape. Panellists shared their wishes for FORS, emphasising its continued excellence and openness to interdisciplinary collaboration. FORS Director Georg Lutz outlined future challenges, including data quality and compliance with new data protection laws. Despite challenges, FORS remains committed to high-quality data collection and expanding its reach beyond the social sciences through initiatives like SWISSUbase. The celebration acknowledged the pivotal role of dedicated individuals and organisations in FORS’s success over the past 15 years.

Train the trainers’ workshop: Sharing personal data through a data repository

The half-day event, hosted by FORS’s data management support team in collaboration with the University of Lausanne’s research office took place on November 28. The workshop was tailored for support staff, data managers, librarians, and research consultants involved in data management and aimed to guide participants on assessing the shareability of research data, encompassing both quantitative and qualitative data, including personal and sensitive information. The focus was on data already collected and intended for sharing

in repositories like SWISSUbase. The workshop began by defining personal and sensitive data and then concentrated on four key conditions for their sharing. These conditions included the legality of personal data collection, the legality of retaining personal data post-project completion, the presence of a legal basis for sharing personal data (such as informed consent, “research privilege”, and anonymisation), and the implementation of access control mechanisms for personal data. Also, a new tool named DataGo was introduced. This free tool is designed to assess dataset shareability and offer additional guidance to the research community. Modelled after the open access assistant Papago, DataGo was unveiled for the first time during this workshop. The questions and answers raised during the workshop and the documentation can be found on the [workshop’s webpage](#).

Workshop: “Safe access to sensitive research data”

After a first workshop in November 2022, co-organised by DARISS and the University of Applied Sciences of the Grisons, a second national workshop on the same topic took place in Bern on 8 December. The second workshop, again with a variety of stakeholder institutions, covered several key topics with the core idea of establishing a National Competence Center for Sensitive Data (NCCSD). Breakout sessions in working groups addressed various aspects of safe data access and allowed for more interaction amongst the participants. The afternoon sessions featured a continuation of working groups summarising their results, leading into a plenum discussion. The final part of the workshop focused on drawing conclusions from the day’s discussions and outlining next steps.

The 27th Swiss Summer School on Methods in the Social Sciences

Jointly organised by USI and FORS, the 27th Swiss Summer School on Methods in the Social Sciences took place at the Università della Svizzera Italiana in Lugano from August 10 to August 25.

The following workshops were offered (number of participants in parentheses, a * denotes an online-only workshop):

- » First week (14–18 August): E. Horber, Multivariate Methods for Social Researchers (17); S. Kernbach, Design Thinking for Research (9); J. Drzewiecka, Qualitative Analyses of Interview Data (21); E. Davidov/ P. Schmidt, Introduction to Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)* (16); M. Grätz, Causal Analysis with Cross-sectional Data (17); M. Steenbergen, Machine Learning - What Is It Good For? (14); T. Hills, Using Social Network Analysis to Understand Data (12); M. Bergman, Mixed Methods (14); L. Balachandran Nair, Conducting a Grounded Theory Study (9).

- » Second week (21–25 August): M. Gibbert, Qualitative Research Designs (17); B. Lepori/ A. Rocci, How to Forge Arguments in Writing (Social Sciences) Scientific Papers (15); R. Samuel, Creating Groups from Data. Cluster Analysis and Latent Class Analysis (16); K. O'Reilly, Ethnographic Methods (15); P. Mello, Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) (14); *T. Hills, Content Analysis and Natural Language Processing (13); V. Mottier, Discourse Theory and Analysis (13); O. Lipps/ U. Kuhn, Applied Panel Data Analysis (26); L. Walasek, Web Scraping and Data Mining in R (13).
- » Optional two- or three-day preliminary workshops (10–12 August): P. Gruber, Introduction to R and Rstudio* (32); O. Lipps/ U. Kuhn, Introduction to Stata* (28); E. Horber, Statistics with SPSS for Social Scientists* (25); S. Kernbach, Visual Thinking for PhD Researchers (14).

Seventy-nine per cent of the 247 participants were students from Swiss and foreign universities. One hundred (40%) participants came from outside Switzerland: Germany (20), Italy (15), Belgium (8), Netherlands (8), Austria (6), United States (6), Norway (4), Poland (4), United Kingdom (4), India (3), Lithuania (3), Spain (3), Czech Republic (2), France (2), Ireland (2), Luxembourg (2), and one each from Canada, Denmark, Finland, Latvia, Macedonia, Singapore, Sweden, United Arab Emirates.

The largest groups of this year's participants are working in the field of Sociology (18%), Business Studies (14%), Psychology (12%), Political Science (11%), Education (9%), and Communication Sciences (9%).

GREC

Founded in 2017, the Research Group on Elections and Political Citizenship (GREC) is a research unit of the Institute of Political Studies ([IEP](#)) at the UNIL. The GREC serves as a forum for intellectual exchange and discussion for researchers and doctoral candidates from IEP and other institutions working in the fields of elections and referendums, social movements, activism, and political citizenship. Furthermore, GREC's mission is to encourage the use of FORS surveys (particularly SELECTS and SHP) and to strengthen collaboration between IEP and FORS. This cooperation is reflected in the organisational structure: The head of the political surveys group at FORS and a researcher from the IEP have been the co-leaders of GREC since October 2022. Since spring 2023, a researcher from FORS and one from the ISS have provided organisational and administrative support. In 2023, GREC organised two one-day workshops, co-organised three roundtables (two with COSPOL, one with Lagape/Crapul/OVPR) around the federal elections, and hosted seven speakers from Switzerland and abroad.

Methods and Research Meetings

Together with the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences SSP at the UNIL, FORS has continued to successfully organise the joint seminar series Methods and Research meetings. This series aims to engage researchers and practitioners into a methodological discourse on current topics in survey and data analysis methods research. In 2023, five presentations were held with speakers from Switzerland and abroad. The titles of the presentations were the following: “Gender equity in the first two years of the pandemic”, “Using apps and sensors to augment (or replace?) regular surveys”, “ResIN: A method for analysing attitude networks and attitude positioning on a latent space”, and “Harmony: Development and use of Harmony, a Natural Language Processing tool to facilitate measurement harmonisation across studies”. The full list of the speakers and presentations can be found on the [FORS Methods and Research Meetings webpage](#).

FORS Lunch seminars

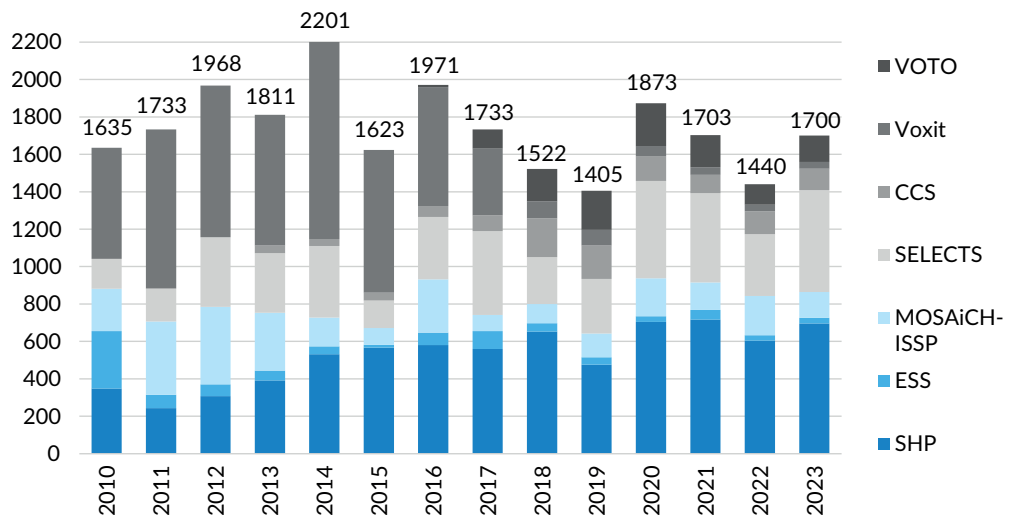
The FORS lunch seminars are held to foster scholarly exchange between FORS researchers and related researchers to profit from their diverse scientific and disciplinary backgrounds. Occasionally, researchers from outside of FORS are invited to present their research findings. In 2023, ten lunch seminars were held, including two special seminars, notably one to celebrate the publication of the 20th FORS GUIDE and one with the winners of the 2022 FORS Data Reuse Award. The detailed programme can be viewed on the [seminars' dedicated webpage](#).

8.3 Performance Indicators

FORS maintains a set of indicators that allow us to assess accomplishments and progress on different fronts. Below are various results for 2023:

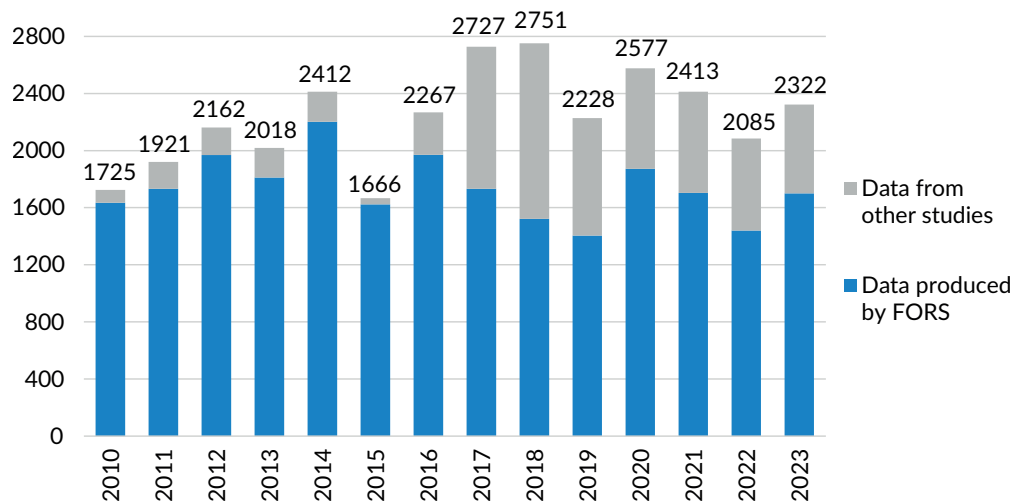
Number of datasets produced by FORS surveys that were distributed to researchers

A total of 1 700 FORS-produced datasets were distributed by FORS to researchers in 2023.



In addition to the distribution by FORS, the Swiss parts of the studies ESS and ISSP data can also be downloaded from the international websites of these projects. The data for the Survey of Health, Aging and Retirement in Europe (SHARE), conducted by FORS, are only available in this way.

Number of datasets from the FORS data service distributed to or downloaded by researchers

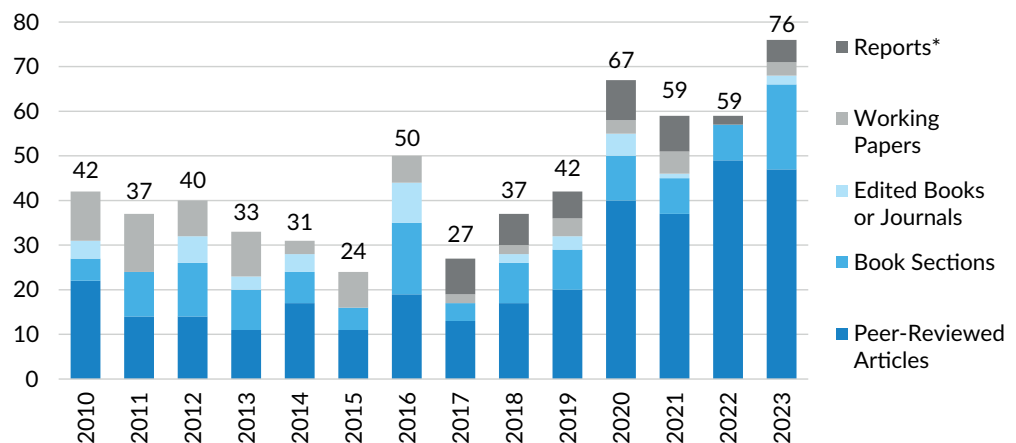


2 322 datasets in the social sciences were downloaded from SWISSUbase in 2023.

Number of new research project descriptions in the research project catalogue

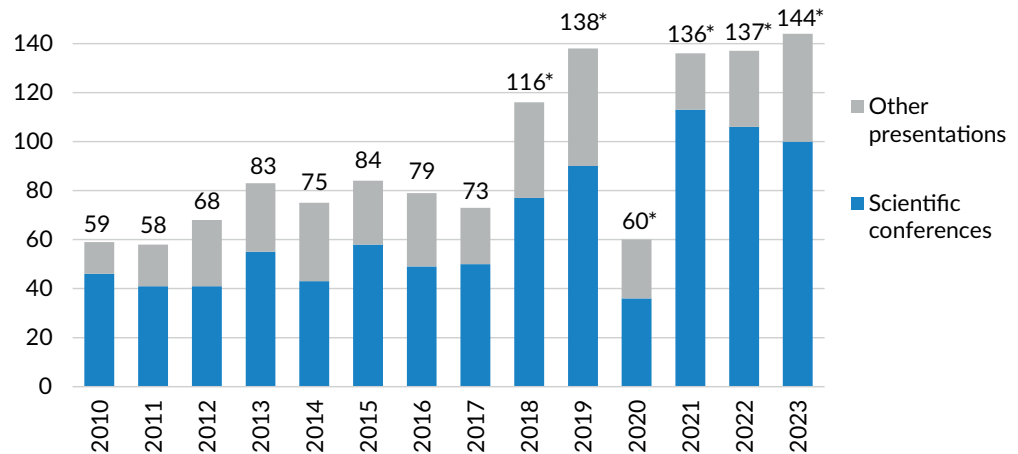
The research project catalogue comprised around 12 200 descriptions in the social sciences, with 298 newly published entries by the end of 2023.

Publications by FORS staff



* Until 2016, the reports were included in the category "Working papers".

Presentations by FORS staff at conferences and scholarly meetings



* From 2018 not only the collaborators, but also the associated researchers were asked to hand in their presentations.

There were 144 presentations of FORS staff and associated researchers at conferences and scholarly meetings in 2023, compared to 137 in 2022. Also, see the complete list of 2023 publications and presentations by FORS staff on [this interactive webpage](#) (click on the year “2023” for full information).

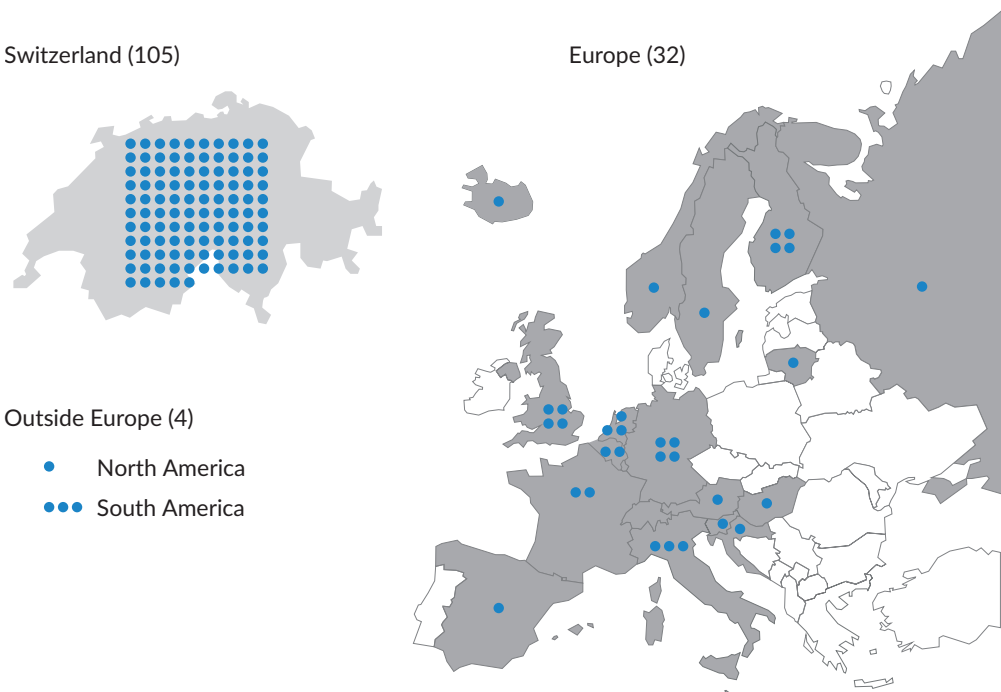
Number of national and international collaborative research projects

Switzerland (105)

Europe (32)

Outside Europe (4)

- North America
- South America

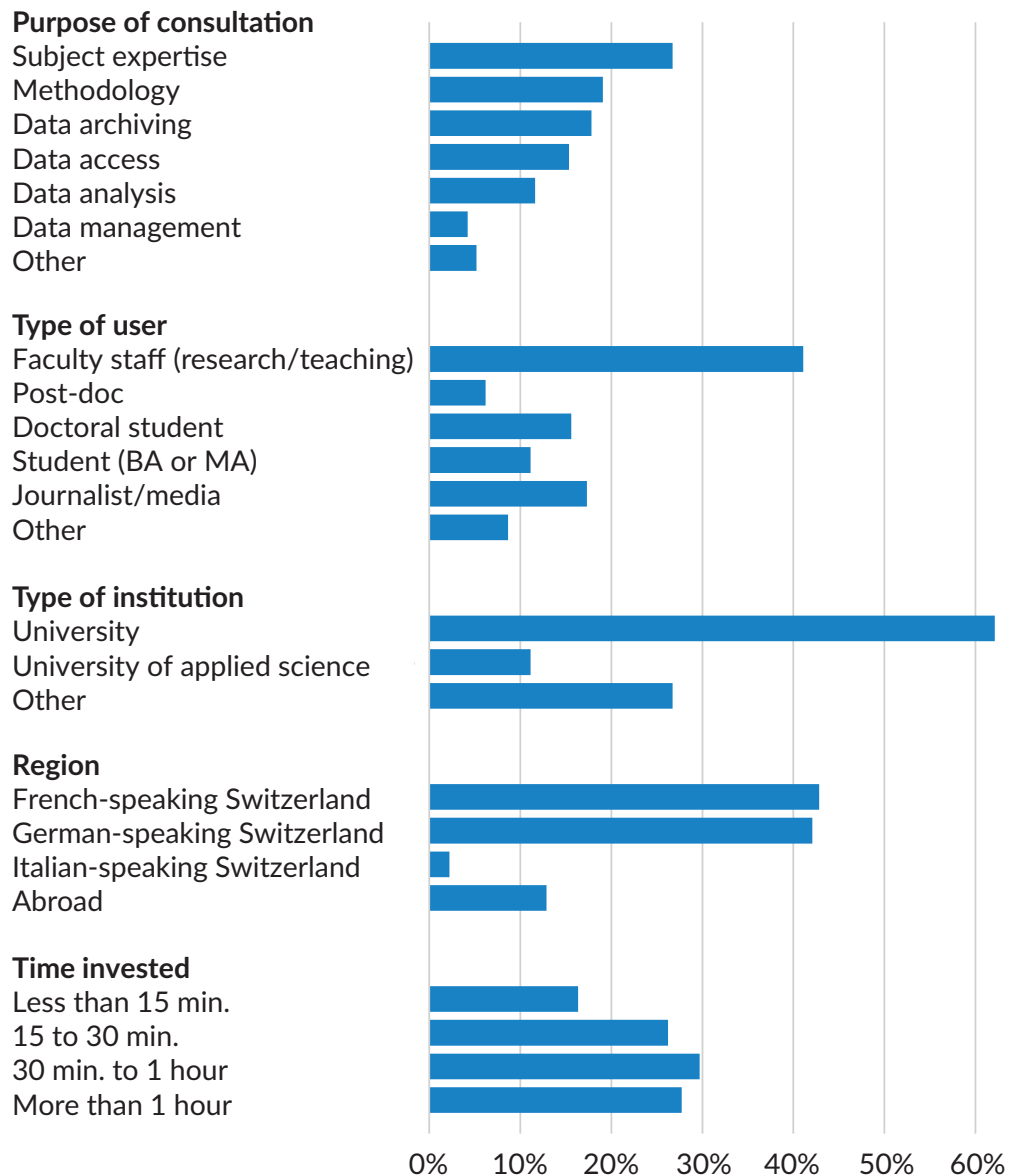


Only includes projects aiming for publications in peer-reviewed journals. Some projects involve several countries.

Number of collaborative research projects and scientific activities with outside organisations and individuals

Developing and maintaining linkages and synergies between FORS staff and the outside research community is a key activity for FORS. This indicator addresses collaborative links with researchers in Switzerland and abroad.

Characteristics of consultations by FORS collaborators (in % of all consultations, n=417)



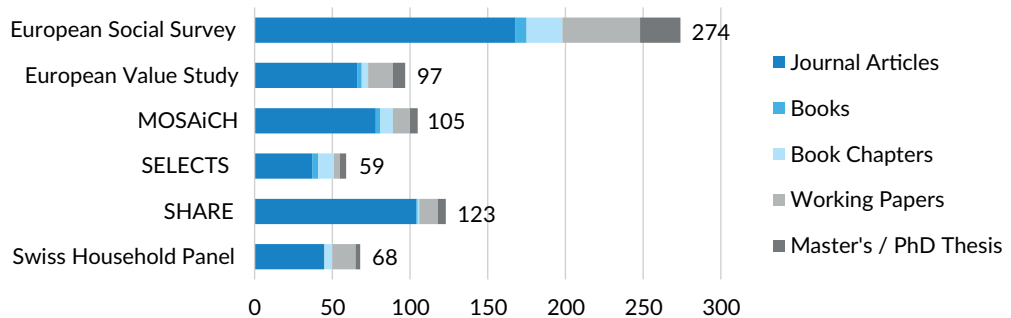
In 2023, 29 FORS staff members were involved in 120 collaborative projects with outside organisations. Thus, around 75% of eligible FORS staff were involved in research activities. This is a slight decrease compared to last year (125 collaborative projects). This is due to cyclical and circumstantial effects; gradual end of collaborations with some retired members of UNIL, reaching

maturity of projects linked to COVID, but also related to EVS data from 2017, and based on the 2019 federal elections, change of UNIL post-docs associated to FORS in 2023 and construction of their new networks.

Three out of four (73%) of these collaborative projects were with individuals from the French-speaking part of Switzerland, 14% with colleagues from the German-speaking part of Switzerland and 28% with foreign institutions (some projects involved several institutions from different regions; thus, the total exceeds 100%).

This concentration in the French-speaking part of the country is due in particular to the close ties of some collaborators with other institutions in Lausanne and Geneva (in particular LINES/LIVES). FORS international collaborations are very diversified, including a broad range of foreign countries or regions (19).

Number of 2023 publications based on data produced by FORS



In 2023, there were at least 726 publications worldwide that used the Swiss data from surveys produced by FORS, including 274 for the ESS, 123 for SHARE, and 105 for MOSAiCH. Most of the publications (69%) were peer-reviewed articles in academic journals. Eight percent of the publications were methodological in nature.

Number of hours devoted to teaching by FORS staff

Sharing knowledge and shaping future researchers through teaching is an important task of FORS.

In total, nine FORS staff members taught in 2023. They gave 331 teaching hours in ten different courses at all academic levels (bachelor, master and PhD), as well as in the context of continuing education. The topics covered concerned predominantly data analysis and data management, but also survey

methodology. The biggest part (75%) of the teaching hours were provided in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, with the exception of three courses given at the University of Berne and at the Swiss summer school 2023 in Lugano.

Thus, about one quarter of eligible FORS staff were involved in teaching activities. FORS will continue to make a contribution to the training of young scientists according to its possibilities and resources.

- » Heers, Marieke. Spring semester 2023. «Démographie Sociale B: Education et Migration». University of Lausanne, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, bachelor level seminar.
- » Lipps, Oliver and Ursina Kuhn. 10–11 August 2023. “Introduction to Stata”. The 27th Summer School in Social Science Methods, Lugano, online course.
- » Lipps, Oliver and Ursina Kuhn. 21–25 August 2023. “Applied Panel Data Analysis”. The 27th Summer School in Social Science Methods, Lugano, online course.
- » Lipps, Oliver. Autumn semester 2023. “Health and Wellbeing – empirische Befunde und ihre Rezipierbarkeit”. Institute for Sociology at the University of Bern, master level seminar.
- » Lutz, Georg (with Lionel Marquis). Spring semester 2023. «Elections et votations en Suisse: Analyse de données d’enquête». University of Lausanne, IEPI, bachelor level course.
- » Rennwald, Line (with Lionel Marquis). Autumn semester 2023. «Atelier pratique de recherche: Inégalités sociales et vote». University of Lausanne, IEP, master level seminar.
- » Tresch, Anke. Spring semester 2023. «Séminaire d’introduction aux méthodes quantitatives: Les campagnes électorales». University of Lausanne, IEP, bachelor level course.
- » Ryser, Valérie-Anne. Spring semester 2023. «Approches pluridisciplinaires des parcours de vie: Introduction». Faculté des sciences sociales et politiques (SSP). University of Lausanne, bachelor level courses (second/ third year).
- » Wernli, Boris. Spring semester 2023. «Séminaire d’introduction aux méthodes quantitatives: Grandes enquêtes – analyses empiriques». University of Lausanne, faculty SSP, bachelor level course.
- » Wernli, Boris and Max Felder. 27 April 2023 and 4 May 2023. “Survey design, questionnaire construction and data preparation”. IDHEAP, Lausanne, continuous training.

9. FORS Governance

As an independent national organisation, FORS has various bodies in place that ensure its good governance: a Foundation Board, a Scientific Advisory Board as well as the FORS management team.

As a Foundation listed in the Swiss commercial register, FORS has its own statutes, financial regulations and various other agreements in place. Among them are the collaboration agreements with the University of Lausanne and the Social and Political Science Faculty of the UNIL, a collaboration agreement around SWISSUbase, which is an independent simple association, and a collaboration agreement with DaSCH, the partner organisation of FORS from the humanities. Special mandates are also in place for the three commissions for the national surveys (Selects, MOSAiCH and Swiss Household Panel), which have the academic responsibility for the respective surveys. The FORS Foundation Board elects these commissions and gives them their mandate for a four-year period.

Between 2008 and 2020, the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) jointly financed most of the activities of FORS. As of 2021, the SNSF has fully funded FORS's key activities, including data services. The funding is governed by a four-year service level agreement (2021-2024) that outlines the major tasks and activities of FORS. FORS and the SNSF administrative office meet twice a year to discuss practical aspects of the service level agreement and ensure coordination.

Foundation Board

The Foundation Board, the governing body of FORS, has been chaired by Professor Estelle Doudet of the host university since 2021. Comprising eight designated members from key stakeholders (swissuniversities, University of Lausanne, SFSO, and Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences), the Foundation Board holds twice-yearly meetings. In March 2023, the board approved the annual accounts and the audit report for the year 2022 and mandated the Scientific Advisory Board to evaluate INDEV. In November of the same year, the board approved the annual planning for 2024 and elected the Selects commission for a four-year period. Additionally, the board nominated Prof. Anita Auer to represent DaSCH on the FORS Foundation Board and delegated Prof. Stephanie Steinmetz to represent FORS on the DaSCH board instead of the FORS Director.

Scientific Advisory Board

The Scientific Advisory Board, was held as an in-person meeting in March 2023, chaired by Prof. Mick Couper. The FORS Director gave an update on several important developments around FORS, mainly around research infrastructures. The board then discussed an update on the FORS Connect panel, the Research Inventory 2.0, the report on “User Feedback” and a report from the SHP, Selects and MOSAiCH commission.

A joint meeting between the Foundation Board and the Scientific Advisory Board also took place in March 2023. During this meeting, discussions were held on an input paper titled “A legal and institutional basis for the secondary use of data in Switzerland”, which outlines a possible institutional and legal framework necessary for improved access to existing data for research. Additionally, an extended discussion occurred in the joint meeting regarding an input paper titled “FORS: Strategic outlook 2030 and beyond, first discussion and future orientation”. This paper not only outlined strategic plans for FORS beyond 2030 but also provided insights ahead of the next funding cycle on how FORS can utilise existing resources and identified areas where additional resources may be required for key strategic developments.

FORS Management

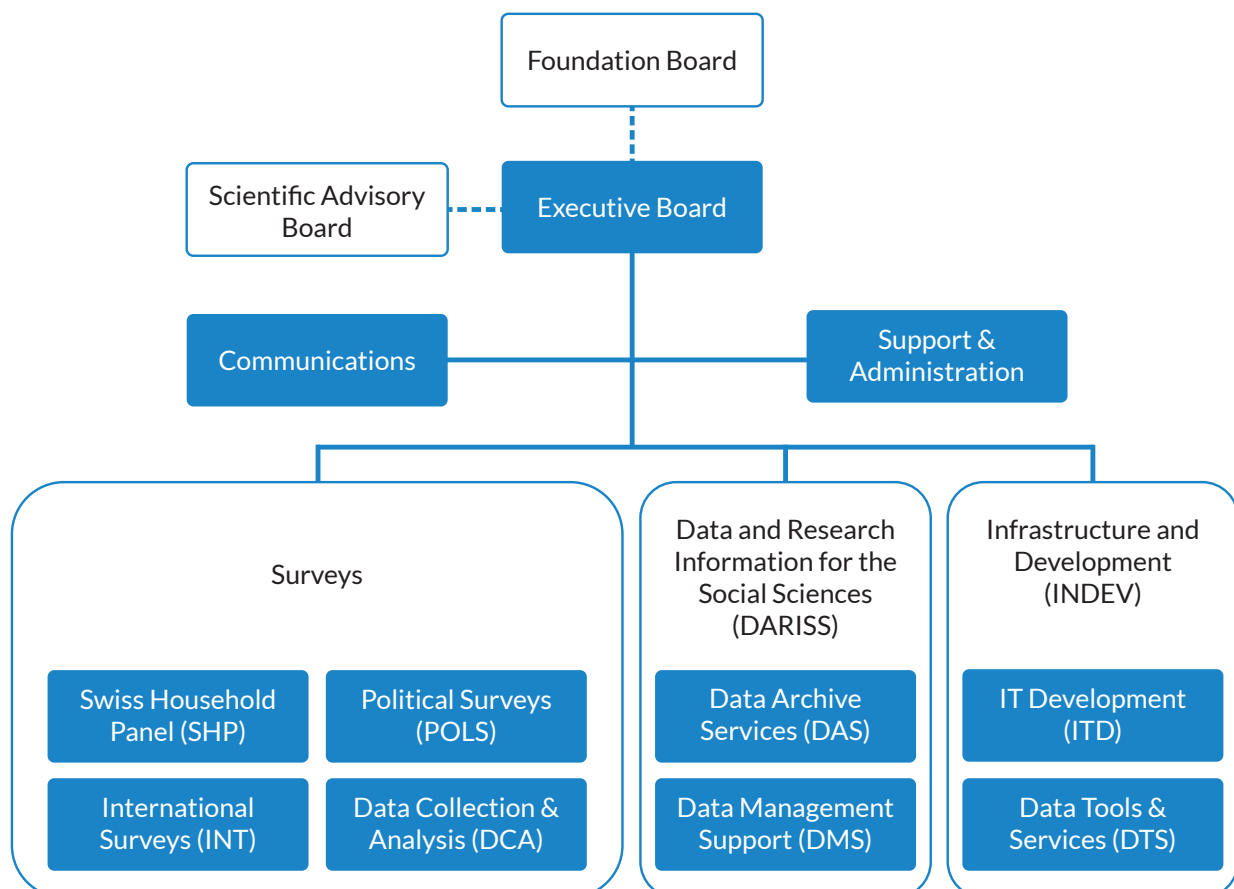
The FORS Executive Board, chaired by the FORS Director, comprises the heads of “Surveys”, “Data and Research Information for the Social Sciences” (DARISS), and the newly established “Infrastructure and Development” (INDEV) units, as well as the head of Finance and Personnel. The Board typically meets twice a month, with the Communications Officer and the Coordinator of the SSP-FORS Joint Research Programme in attendance. The meetings are minuted and sent to the President of the Foundation Board to keep her informed of ongoing work. Key formal decisions on all day-to-day matters take place at the executive board meetings. FORS also uses different instruments for more long-term planning, which include a fixed annual planning and budgeting cycle where all units and groups contribute. Those result in an annual workplan with key priorities and the budget, documents that are approved every year by the Foundation board. Annual scientific reporting and the collection of KPIs – through this report – and financial reporting and auditing are also taking place. A special focus is given to user feedback. The collection of user feedback is integral to the internal annual report, fostering a continuous, structured reflection on ways to enhance services and products.

FORS initiated a more structured internal evaluation process in 2022 with the goal to reflect in regular intervals on the tasks, objective and functioning of the various units of FORS in order to gain broader perspectives beyond day-to-day operations. To conduct these evaluations, the FORS Foundation Board mandates the Scientific Advisory Board, which may involve external experts. While the

process started in 2022 with DARISS, an evaluation of INDEV was conducted in the autumn of 2023 and an evaluation report was submitted to the foundation board by the end of 2023.

One of the main internal changes was the adaption of the new FORS work environment in 2023. FORS gave up fixed office spaces for all FORS collaborators including the management team. All office spaces are shared in a flexible way by those who are at work in the building at any given day. A lot of other spaces with special functionalities were created, from meeting rooms of different sizes, collaborative spaces, cabins for Zoom calls and small meetings, to a library and a cafeteria. The building and refurbishing work took place mostly during spring and summer 2023 which required a lot of moving during that time. Different internal working groups were involved in different aspects of this process like the definition of the different spaces, rules to be applied for their usage, decoration and digitalisation of the entire infrastructure. In addition, staff satisfaction surveys were conducted in 2022 and 2023 to gather insights into the needs of FORS staff. The results will be published in 2024.

Organisational Chart

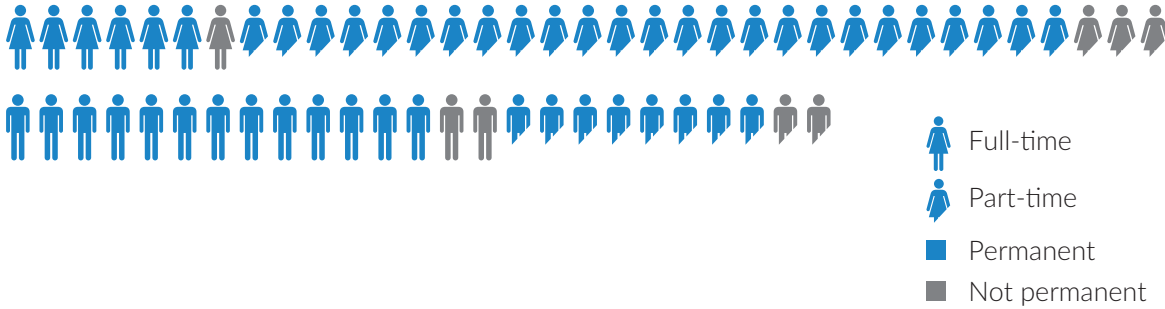


10. Staff statistics & finance

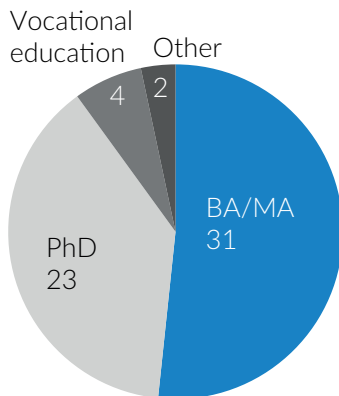
Staff

Status of employment

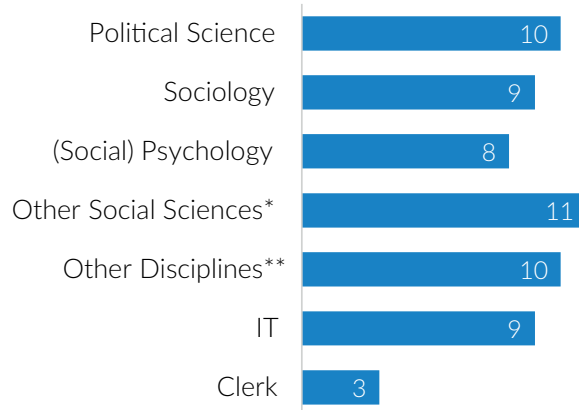
60 employees, 49.6 full-time equivalents



Degree of formation



Disciplines



* Social sciences, ethnology, behavioral science, communication, demography, economics, education, human geography

** History, humanities, linguistics, mathematics, statistics, translation

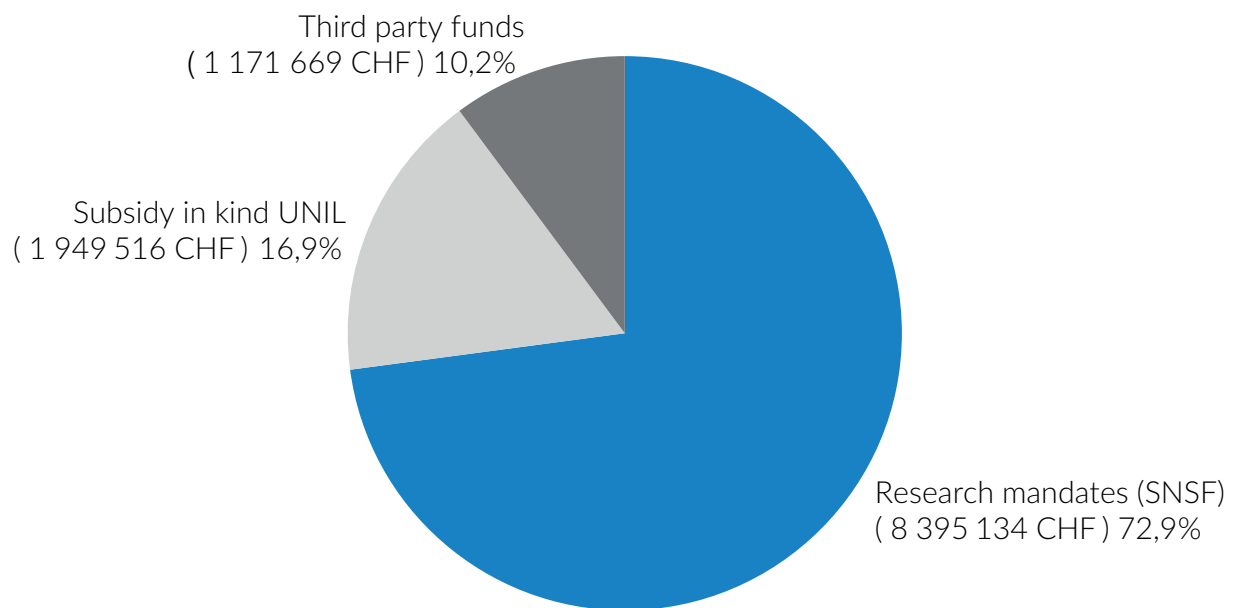
Nationalities and mother languages

- 46 Swiss
- 4 German
- 3 French
- 2 Finnish
- 2 US-citizen
- 1 Australian
- 1 Chilean
- 1 Dutch
- 1 Hungarian
- 1 Italian
- 1 Polish
- 1 Portuguese
- 1 Romanian
- 1 Serb
- 1 Spanish

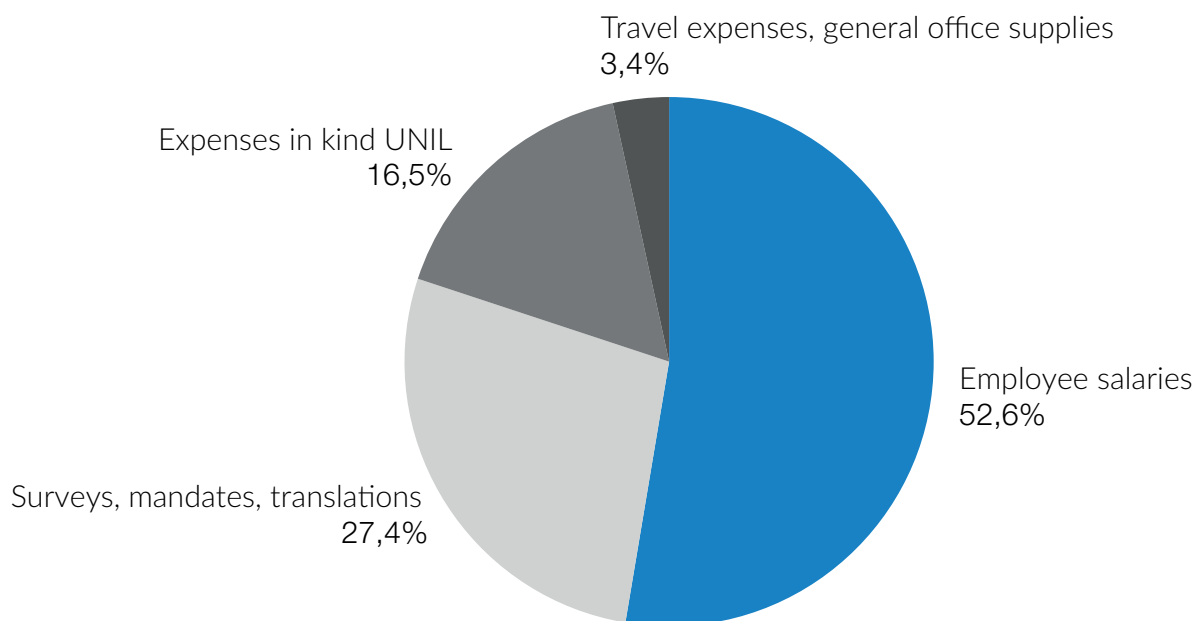


Finance

Income



Expenses



11. List of Abbreviations

CATI	Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing
CAWI	Computer Assisted Web Interviewing
CCS	Comparative Candidate Survey
CESSDA	Consortium of European Social Science Data Archives
CLARIN	Common Language Resources and Technology Infrastructure
CNEF	Cross-National Equivalent File
CNES	Consortium of National Election Studies
DARIAH	Digital Research Infrastructure for the Arts and Humanities
DaSCH	Data and Service Center for the Humanities
DSUs	Data Service Units
ERIC	European Research Infrastructure Consortium
ESFRI	European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures
ESS	European Social Survey
EVS	European Values Study
FAIR	Findability, Accessibility, Interoperability, and Reuse of digital assets.
GESIS	Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften
ISSP	International Social Survey Programme
LiRI	Linguistic Research Infrastructure, University of Zurich
LIVES	Swiss Centre of Expertise in Lifecourse Research LIVES
MEDem	Monitoring Electoral Democracies (European Research Infrastructure)
MOSAiCH	Measurement and Observation of Social Attitudes in Switzerland
SELECTS	Swiss Electoral Studies
SFSO	Swiss Federal Statistical Office
SHARE	Survey on Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe
SHP	Swiss Household Panel
SMT	Survey Management Tool
SNSF	Swiss National Science Foundation
SSHOC	Social Science and Humanities Open Cloud
SWISSUbase	National cross-disciplinary data repository
SWITCH	Swiss Foundation managing digital services
UNIL	University of Lausanne (Host University)

FORS

Bâtiment Géopolis, 5th floor

Reception desk - room 5614

CH-1015 Lausanne

+41 (0)21 692 37 30

info@forscenter.ch

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Open Concept AS, Norway
openconcept.no