

FORS 

explore.understand.share.

Annual Report 2024

Lausanne, March 2025

Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Editorial from the FORS Director | 3 |
| 2. Surveys | 5 |
| 2.1 Swiss Household Panel SHP | 5 |
| 2.2 International Surveys | 9 |
| ESS | 9 |
| MOSAiCH / ISSP | 11 |
| EVS..... | 14 |
| SHARE | 15 |
| 2.3 Political surveys..... | 17 |
| 3. Data Management and Archive services (DMAS) | 19 |
| Data Archive Services (DAS)..... | 20 |
| Data Management Services (DMS)..... | 21 |
| 4. Infrastructure and Development INDEV | 24 |
| IT developments..... | 24 |
| SWISSUbase | 25 |
| Collaboration with other data infrastructures | 26 |
| 5. Scientific collaborations | 28 |
| Host university..... | 28 |
| Policy dialogue and national coordination | 28 |
| National research projects | 29 |
| International collaborations..... | 30 |
| 6. Methodological Research..... | 33 |
| 7. Data collection and analysis DCA..... | 41 |
| 8. Outreach, output and events | 47 |
| 8.1 Publications | 47 |
| 8.2 Events | 50 |
| 8.3 Outreach..... | 53 |
| 8.4 Performance Indicators..... | 54 |
| 9. FORS Governance..... | 60 |
| Foundation Board..... | 61 |
| Scientific Advisory Board | 61 |
| FORS Management..... | 61 |
| Organisational Chart..... | 62 |
| 10. Staff statistics & finance..... | 63 |
| 11. List of Abbreviations | 65 |

1. Editorial from the FORS Director

Navigating Challenges, Fostering Collaboration, and Innovating for the Future

In 2024, FORS's dedicated staff successfully completed a wide range of planned activities. We collected high-quality datasets for our projects and for numerous external partners on a mandate basis, archived and disseminated datasets along with their documentation, maintained and further developed the SWISSUbase platform and its associated services, contributed to the coordination and advancement of various national and international research projects, and engaged in numerous research activities, as this annual report clearly demonstrates.

A major milestone in 2024 was the submission of the funding application for the 2025–2028 period to FORS's primary funder, the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF). FORS successfully secured funding for a portfolio of activities similar to that of the 2021–2024 period. The SNSF acknowledged FORS's critical role in advancing research and innovation in the social sciences and beyond, as well as its contribution to providing essential information resources and data for the broader research community. However, the SNSF was unable to compensate for rising costs – particularly salary increases – over the past four years due to inflation. This funding gap will require adjustments to FORS's budget and may limit our capacity for innovation. Additional activities will need to be supported through external resources.

While we are pleased to continue our work, it is also crucial to ensure FORS's funding beyond 2028. Discussions about funding research infrastructures across all domains in Switzerland are ongoing, and FORS is actively participating in these conversations. Given the constrained financial situation at the national level, finding a more stable funding solution for national research infrastructures remains as challenging as it is necessary, because the lack of a stable funding environment also creates many inefficiencies.

Building and developing existing infrastructure in the social sciences is a priority. Established projects, such as the FORS-hosted surveys and the SWISSUbase platform, continue to evolve and adapt. In addition, FORS is involved in several promising new initiatives that gained momentum in 2024. For example, the Monitoring Electoral Democracy (MEDem) infrastructure, in which FORS collaborates with the University of Lausanne, is preparing to submit its application for inclusion on the ESFRI roadmap in 2025. At the national level, FORS is contributing to initiatives such as the Swiss Elites and Power Data Platform, which integrates various elite research projects, and the Direct Democracy Research Infrastructure, which builds on existing individual- and aggregate-level data collections. These national infrastructures will be submitted to the national infrastructure roadmap process in 2025.

While individual initiatives are important, fostering collaboration between existing and new infrastructures is equally critical. To promote structured collaboration among existing infrastructures and to ensure a coordinated presence in the ongoing political discussions surrounding research

infrastructures, FORS played a key role in founding the Social Sciences and Humanities Open Cluster Switzerland (SSHOC-CH) in 2024. Over 60 representatives from national research infrastructures and other stakeholders joined the new association in its inaugural year.

Looking ahead, FORS remains committed to its mission of supporting high-quality social science research and fostering collaboration across disciplines. Despite financial challenges, we are determined to innovate, adapt, and contribute to the advancement of research infrastructures 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

Six principal tasks

The SHP team achieved six principal tasks in 2024:

1. The fieldwork for the four SHP samples that had started by the end of August 2023 was completed early March. This concerned wave 25 of the SHP_I (2 162 households and 3 254 individuals interviewed), wave 20 of the SHP_II (978 households and 1 453 individuals interviewed), wave 11 of the SHP_III (1 382 households and 2 045 individuals interviewed), and wave 4 of the SHP_IV (2 347 households and 3 914 individuals interviewed). In total 6 869 households and 10 666 individuals participated. For detailed information about participation rates, we refer to <https://forscenter.ch/projects/swiss-household-panel/documentation/>.

The main mode of interviewing remains CATI for the older samples (SHP_I to SHP_III). Face-to-face interviews are no longer conducted. However, approximately 4% participated by web (CAWI) at the household level, while 17% (SHP_II and SHP_III) did so at the individual level. Web is a bit less common at the individual level in the oldest sample (SHP_I, 14,5%). The most recent sample (SHP_IV) followed a different design, using CATI when a telephone number was available, and CAWI otherwise in the first wave, completed in 2020, making it a true mixed-mode survey. In the fourth wave, 62% of household questionnaires were completed by CATI and 38% by CAWI. For the individual questionnaire this was 49% and 51% respectively. The distribution of modes is quite stable over time. In total, 163 interviewers and supervisors from

MIS Trend carried out the telephone interviews (95 in Bern, 68 in Lausanne) and managed the online data collection. The average duration of the CATI questionnaire was around 15 minutes (12 minutes in CAWI) at the household level, and 41 minutes (34 in CAWI) at the individual level for all samples. At the individual level (CATI), this was 4 minutes more than the previous wave due to the administration of the rotating political and social participation modules.

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 for dissemination via [SWISSUbase](#) at the beginning of 2025. 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. Offering a long file to data users was suggested during the SHP evaluation in 2021 and by the SHP Scientific Commission to facilitate working with longitudinal data for our data users. It also contains documentation such as questionnaires and a user guide, as well as syntax examples.

2. Between February and August, the SHP team prepared the fieldwork for waves 26 (SHP_I), 21 (SHP_II), 12 (SHP_III), and 5 (SHP_IV). This involved the preparation of the questionnaires (integrating annual changes and adaptations), a quantitative pre-test (creation of scenarios to test the programming of the questionnaire), communication to 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 2024. Rotating modules administered in this wave are religion and psychological scales. Around 10 200 individual interviews are targeted.
3. The tasks associated with data harmonisation took place during this period as well. A revised and harmonised version of the SHP data waves 1 to 25 (1999 to 2023), along with a codebook, was prepared for inclusion in the [Cross-National Equivalent File](#) (CNEF) at the beginning of 2025. 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 (HILDA) Survey, 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 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 team is not involved in the preparation of the syntax for the harmonised variables.

4. The eighth SHP Methodological Workshop took place on June 4–7 at the University of Lausanne. The first day, organised by members of the SHP team, was dedicated to an introduction to the SHP (presenting the main aims, data collection, structure of the data, and data organisation). The rest of the workshop was devoted to the topic of “Sequence Data Analysis”. The course was given by Prof. Matthias Studer, Prof. Emer. Gilbert Ritschard, and PhD Kevin Emery of the University of Geneva. The first day was dedicated to a general introduction to sequence analysis and its uses in the social sciences, and an introduction to R. The rest of the day was devoted to descriptive sequence analysis and visualization, and longitudinal sequence indicators. The second day was consecrated to clustering state sequences using Hamming distance, other distance measures and clustering algorithms, typologies in subsequent regressions and analysis, and advanced clustering methods. Finally, the third day was devoted to longitudinal data management, missing data in sequence analysis, and multidomain/multichannel analysis. The workshop was attended by 24 participants, who gave very positive feedback on the workshop.
5. In February 2022, the Scientific Advisory Board of FORS validated the creation of an SHP scientific commission. The main task of this commission is 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 from various academic and research institutions, including universities in Switzerland, the UK, Germany and the Netherlands, as well as institutes specialising in the social sciences and health research. The commission’s second meeting took place on 3 June. The programme was first dedicated to the measures taken since the initial meeting in relation to the commission’s conclusions regarding refreshment sample, data linkage, user friendliness, biomarkers, new survey questions on migration, and resources. Second, to a presentation of the refreshment sample design (SHP_V to be launched in 2027). Third, to the results of the SHP_II experiment with reduced incentives. Fourth, to a presentation of the project “How does Individual Religiosity Change”, a project using both quantitative SHP data and qualitative interviews with SHP respondents. Fifth, to new projects under consideration (biomarkers, possible collaboration between SHP and a future Time-Use Survey). Sixth, to network and events.

The discussions led to seven main conclusions. First, the members of the commission were impressed with the work done by the SHP since last year’s meeting. Second, the commissioners urged the SHP team to explore low-cost

strategies to increase the participation of migrants, thereby correcting the current under-representation of migrants in the SHP. Third, while the commissioners were impressed by the existence of a long file, they urged the SHP team to more strongly publicise this novelty to users (although there had been some communication on this issue by FORS). They also recommended that the SHP team actively inform users about new research based on SHP data. Fourth, the commissioners are aware that data linkage raises a number of legal and practical issues. Nevertheless, even modest progress in data linkage would be a major step forward for the SHP and its users. Fifth, the commission raised the possibility of reducing survey costs by making incentives to non-respondents in SHP wave t0 conditional in the subsequent SHP wave t1. With regard to the experimental evidence presented on reduced incentives (CHF 10 instead of CHF 20) for respondents from SHP_II, the commissioners encouraged the SHP team to continue this analysis in the next wave. Sixth, the members of the commission were uncertain about the best option for a time use survey. Another option of measuring time was raised: Kahneman's Day Reconstruction Method (DRC). Seventh, the commission encourages the SHP team to further explore avenues to include, in the future, measures of biomarkers in the SHP. There is no doubt that such an initiative would require external funding and a strong external partner.

6. Finally, the SHP team continued working with SMT following the successful migration of the SHP application to the platform and began further testing, see [Chapter 4: Infrastructure and Development](#) (INDEV).

2.2 International Surveys

The year 2024 was centred on MOSAiCH 2024 (field, preparation of the next edition, and archiving of the previous one), on ESS R11 data archiving and R12 preparation, and finally for SHARE the preparation and field of Wave 10 with a refreshment sample. The International Survey projects are funded through the FORS SNSF grant except for SHARE (SNSF project grant). 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 II and Infra4NextGen, where EVS and ESS collaborate, or the SSHOC project (Social Science and Humanities Open Science Cluster).

ESS

The European Social Survey (ESS) is an academically driven cross-national survey that has been conducted every two years across Europe since 2002 with very high-quality standards. Switzerland has participated at each round since the very beginning. This general population survey measures the attitudes, beliefs and behaviour patterns of diverse populations in more than thirty nations. In 2024, Switzerland finished the field of ESS R11, archived the data and continued preparations for R12, the round where self-completion mode will be introduced, alongside a last face-to-face field.

Fieldwork

The fieldwork of the ESS R11 (with rotating parts on the topics “Health inequalities” and “Gender in contemporary Europe”) started in March 2023 and was supposed to finish by end of December 2023 but ended only on 31 January 2024, with a lower number of interviews than targeted (1 384 instead of 1 500) and a response rate of 46,4%. The reasons are low interviewer capacity and strong difficulties in contacting respondents, meaning that the difficulties encountered during the COVID pandemic persist in the long term, and that the enormous efforts deployed by the survey agency and the NC team could not fully overcome them. Moreover, all the response enhancing measures developed for the pandemic were still in place. For example, in R11, 4,1% of the interviews were done by video call, which is comparable to R10, and 15,5% outside the respondent’s home, which is only slightly lower than during the pandemic. Together with the ESS headquarters we decided to extend the field by one month, rather than releasing the reserve sample, in order not to raise eventual non-response bias.

Data

The Swiss data and documentation have been prepared in less than four weeks, an absolute speed record thanks to preparatory work. This effort was necessary to be included in the first ESS R11 data release, which in turn increases the chances of our data being used in publications. The survey agency delivered the final raw data set of the interviews on 5 February, and the contact data on 8 February. We deposited all cleaned and coded data and documentation to

the ESS data archive Sikt in Bergen, Norway at end of February 2024. After two loops of data processing, the first ESS R11 data could be released on 20 June along with the data of 12 other countries. The second release of the ESS R11 data with 24 out of the 31 participating countries was available on the ESS Data Portal on 21 November.

R12 preparations

While the tendering process for the ESS R12 field was completed in September, the later confirmed funding of the new period 2025–2028 does not allow to field R12 as foreseen in the ESS specifications. The Swiss team therefore discussed with the survey agency and ESS headquarters on how best to achieve the substantial savings required, while preserving the essential features of the parallel field for the transition to web and paper interviewing modes. We decided to maintain the costly parallel face-to-face field, but to reduce the requirements of its contact procedures. The questionnaire adaptations and the translation procedures for this challenging round began in 2024. The field will start in September 2025.

International

Award

In 2024, the ESS was awarded the [Kohli Foundation Infrastructure Prize for Sociology](#), given to substantial infrastructure that advances sociological knowledge. The Kohli Foundation noted the high-quality data collection of the ESS, relevant questionnaire content and ease of data access as particular strengths. The large number of academic publications using ESS data was also noted. The prize of €10 000 will be re-invested back into the project to recognise specific innovations and impacts at the national level.

Users and publications

The ESS has over 243 000 registered users (7 000 from Switzerland) as of 11 November 2024. Switzerland is on rank 12 regarding the number of registered users and downloads, and on rank 10 regarding active downloaders despite its small size (ESS interactive user statistics: <https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/resources>). The latest bibliographic assessment (2003–22) found 6 585 publications analysing ESS data. Sociology, political science, and economics were primary fields, covering topics like politics, immigration, family, demographics, well-being, culture, welfare, citizenship, work, and inequality. Swiss data featured in 59% of publications, with 255 Swiss authors (9th rank), reflecting high demand and productive use in Switzerland.

International coordination

In 2024, the ERIC NC Forums took place in April in Rome and in November virtually. The main topics of these meetings were: R11 data deposit, preparations for R12 and general matters. From the analysis and discussion of feasibility testing to concrete preparations of the implementation, the transition to self-completion (SC) in R12 was at the heart of these Forums and all exchanges with the ESS HQ and NC of other countries.

The ESS ERIC General assembly met in April and October. The strategic plan, the financing of Round 12, with a parallel field in face-to-face and self-completion in each country, and the rise of the ESS ERIC budget were among the central topics. Switzerland was represented in the General Assembly by a representative from the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI). The SERI is still working towards Switzerland becoming a full member of this ERIC. ESS ERIC continues to have the highest number of member countries (28) of any ERIC. In addition, for R12 there will be several guest countries and Switzerland as an observer.

Switzerland is also represented on another governing board, the Methods Advisory Board (MAB), by a delegate from FORS and the UNIL. Since the renewal in October 2023, there is no other Swiss member in the ESS boards anymore. For details about their compositions, see <https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/about/structure-and-governance>).

MOSAiCH / ISSP

During 2024, the seventh 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 at FORS. The content is defined by the ISSP (part 1) and a public call for contribution addressing the Swiss research community (part 2). In 2022, the central topic was “Digital Society”, a new module. The team prepared and finalised the data preparation and documentation of MOSAiCH 2024 for release in early 2025. The preparation of the 2025 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 a series of promotional activities, notably to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the programme.

Field and research

MOSAiCH 2024 comprises the ISSP 2024 new module on Digital Societies and questions from seven different proposals involving 15 researchers from Switzerland and abroad. The topics of the chosen proposals are: 1) Digital ostracism, 2) Apps for self-change efforts, 3) Digitalisation and loneliness, 4)

Measurement of risk attitudes, 5) Communication behaviours in the digital age, 6) Foreign social media apps and 7) Digital trust and resistance to digital data collection.

While the preparation of the MOSAiCH 2024 questionnaire was mostly achieved during 2023 (call, evaluation of the proposals, development and test of the new questions, and translations of the ISSP and call questions), the survey was set up in early 2024. The MOSAiCH Commission decided to run the 2024 edition in two parts, with 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.

The fieldwork of MOSAiCH 2024 started mid-February (first invitation letter sent 22 February) and ended in July (last answer taken into account: 7 July), based on the optimised contact procedure used since 2019 and a CHF 10 unconditional cash incentive as well as a lottery for the second part. At the time of writing this report, the data and documentation are in finalisation phase. The final response rate (RR) is around 51% for the first part and 32% for the second part, which is among the higher outcomes with the same incentive scheme. The data will be published in February 2025.

The MOSAiCH 2024 field included two experimental aspects. First, we tested whether sending preliminary results of Part 1 with the invitation letter to Part 2 can improve the respondents' motivation to participate. The answer is yes, and we will implement this new measure in future editions. Second, we included a short paper non-respondents questionnaire in a supplementary letter sent after the third reminder to Part 1, as non-response bias in a survey conducted by web first about the topic of digital society might be particularly sensitive. Details about these two experiments are developed in the section on Methodological Research (see [Chapter 6. Methodological Research](#)).

2025 preparations

The public call for question contributions to the MOSAiCH 2025 edition including the ISSP "Work Orientation" module has first been published at the end of 2023. The Scientific MOSAiCH Commission received and evaluated three proposals. During the evaluation meeting at the end of May, it was decided to retain two of them, involving five researchers from Switzerland and abroad, and to give space to some ISSP and MOSAiCH questions from previous "Work Orientation" editions that could not be included in Part 1 but appeared as relevant. 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. A quantitative pretest has been realised with the FORS Connect Panel for assessing the dimensionality of a new scale, pretesting some new ISSP 2026 "Role of Government" items, and a

shorter instrument to measure the level of education to implement in the ESS R12. As usual, all the MOSAiCH 2024 questions were translated into the national languages with the TRAPD procedure.

The call for question contributions to the MOSAiCH 2026 edition including the ISSP “Role of Government VI” module was published on 9 December 2024.

Data

The complete [MOSAiCH 2023 dataset](#), including ISSP 2023 (“National Identity and Citizenship”) and all data related to the call, was documented and published in February 2024. FORS distributed 100 MOSAiCH-ISSP datafiles in 2024.

ISSP international

Regarding ISSP, the international ISSP-archive at GESIS published the first and then second release of ISSP 2021 “Health and Health Care II” in April and August, containing 19 and then 30 countries. In addition, data from three countries were published separately. Five cumulative data files of ISSP were also published during 2024: “Social Inequality I-V” in January with 35 countries, “Religion I-IV” in February with 32 countries, “Environment I-IV” in June with 38 countries, “Work Orientations I-IV” in October with 32 countries, and “Health and Health Care I-II” in December with 22 countries. All these international datasets include Swiss data. The GESIS archive has over 50 000 registered users (over 1 000 from Switzerland) and distributed in 2024 over 10 000 ISSP datasets including Swiss data.

In charge of the Secretariat since 2021, FORS has continued the coordination activities of the programme. In 2024 the ISSP celebrated its 40th anniversary. Special activities were organised for the 2024 General Assembly as well as online during the year.

The 2024 General Assembly was held in-person in Sydney, Australia (27 April – 1 May), with four persons from FORS-SSP representing both Switzerland and the Secretariat. Since 2023, the ISSP has reinstated its regular working principles and procedures regarding membership, voting rights, and committee participation. A return to the standard data deposit deadlines is planned to begin with the 2024 module. As of now, the ISSP comprises 44 member countries. Tunisia, however, lost its membership in 2024 due to ongoing challenges in collecting and delivering ISSP data. During the 2024 ISSP General Meeting, six excellent methodological and substantial papers were presented at the research session, one of them co-authored with a FORS collaborator. The General Assembly discussed and voted on the questions of the 2025 module on “Work Orientations V”. Switzerland was invited to the drafting group of this module. The topics of the 2026 module “Role of Government VI” were defined. Switzerland proposed to repeat the ISSP module on “Social Networks and Social Resources”, a module previously fielded in 2017, as a topic for 2027; this was accepted. The General Assembly

also approved a 10-point guideline concerning probability-based online panels, to guide the evaluation process for new and existing applications wishing to use such designs. Additionally, the General Assembly approved an initiative to revisit the ISSP mandatory Background Variables list and elected a task force to elaborate a proposal.

Besides the organisation of the annual General Assembly in Sydney and the daily business of coordination, the Secretariat organised events and outreach activities for the 40th anniversary. These included an anniversary kick-off event at the General Assembly for ISSP members, the promotion of the ISSP through member quotes and endorsements shared on the website and the social media platform X, and the development of new web pages detailing the added value of each of the 12 ISSP modules. These pages are scheduled to go live by the General Assembly on 25 May in Croatia. The ISSP website has as many as 150 visits and 441 actions per day, and the X account assures a regular presence (1243 followers). Two ISSP panels were organised at the WAPOR 2024 Conference in Seoul, with both substantial and methodological scopes. In November 2024, a special 3rd online ISSP User Conference was held to celebrate the ISSP 40th anniversary. 12 papers were presented in three thematic sessions with an audience of around 45 researchers. A prize for the best paper was sponsored by three ISSP members, including FORS. 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 for the Special Issue of the journal dedicated to the ISSP 40th Anniversary at the end of the year.

EVS

The European Values Study (EVS) held two General Assembly meetings in 2024, the first in Skopje (March) and the second in Cologne (November). The preparation for EVS 2026 was the main topic, including the questionnaire (which features a common core with the World Values Study (WVS), as outlined in the 2023 MoU), methodological guidelines, implementation aspects such as using CenterData for the entire survey cycle, funding of fieldwork, and strategies to integrate EVS into national research infrastructure roadmaps and the ESFRI.

Since the 2025–2028 FORS budget does not cover the EVS, we are seeking third-party funding. Together with EVS partners from Romania and Poland, we submitted a proposal to the MAPS call on the topic of social cohesion in Europe. The download of EVS data continues to be high in number (over 6 100 in 2024, compared to 8 000 in 2023) although the last data release dates back to 2022, showing that the EVS is a relevant infrastructure for social sciences in Europe and beyond. The EVS bibliography comprises now around 3 900 publications.

Operational activities

In spring 2024, wave 9 data were released. At the same time, the wave 10 data collection entered the pretest phase. A key goal of wave 10 for SHARE Switzerland is to add a substantial refreshment sample (around 2 000 interviews). This required significant adjustments to field materials and contact procedures since 55% of the 5 000 delivered addresses from the SFSO (Swiss Federal Statistical Office) lacked phone numbers. Several scenarios were financially and methodologically evaluated. One of the major adjustments was the implementation of a phone lab to recruit refresher households with phone numbers. Previous experience had shown that the high refusal rate in refresher samples severely undermines the motivation of face-to-face interviewers. Trained telephone lab interviewers act as the initial point of contact. They recruit refresher respondents and therefore reduce the workload of face-to-face interviewers. Subsequently, only pre-screened households that consent to participate in the survey are contacted by the face-to-face interviewer. To further increase participation in the refresher sample, the contact letters and informational flyers were extensively revised. The usual material – showcards, interviewer’s data entry booklet, survey software user manual, training materials – was also updated and the wave 10 paper-and-pencil questionnaire focusing on end-of-life and health literacy was finalised.

To better examine the participation rate of the refreshment sample, a methodological experiment was also designed in 2024 for wave 10. During the pretest, and consistent with existing research, interviewers noted that one of the primary challenges in participant recruitment is getting recipients to open the contact letters. In consultation with experts in survey methodology, several strategies were discussed to address this challenge. Based on these discussions, the Swiss SHARE team decided to conduct an experiment to see if including a small object (e.g., a cotton bag) in the invitation letter would increase the likelihood of participants opening it and, consequently, yield a higher participation in the survey. The results of this experiment will be analysed at the end of wave 10. Wave 10 main data collection began in October with the training of around 100 interviewers in five two-day sessions in Zurich, Lucerne, Berne, Lausanne, and Lugano. The Swiss SHARE team actively organised and participated in these sessions. Data collection started in early November.

The Swiss SHARE team attended the following SHARE meetings:

- » SHARE wave 10 FiRe TTT: 27–29 February 2024 (Berlin)
- » SHARE wave 10 post FiRe meeting: 15–17 May (Larnaca, Cyprus)
- » SHARE wave 10 main TTT: 17–19 September (Munich)
- » SHARE wave 10 mid-term meeting: 4–7 December (Innsbruck)

SHARE 2.0

The Swiss SHARE team was actively involved in the development and strategic planning of the SHARE infrastructure. It participated in the various working groups organised by SHARE's international coordination to discuss future content and methodology, and it is contributing significantly to the redesign of SHARE's End-of-life questionnaire.

Other projects

In 2024, the Swiss SHARE team was actively involved in various transversal working groups set up at FORS. It collaborated on the elaboration of a video on data protection and took part in discussions on data linkage, with the aim of finding a solution for linking SHARE survey data with the register data of the SFSO.

Research activities

The Swiss SHARE team worked 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 the Lausanne University Hospital (CHUV) and the UNIL. In 2024, one scientific paper has been published, and several papers were presented at scientific conferences.

A second 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 was published in collaboration with the Geneva Centre for Interdisciplinary Study of Gerontology and Vulnerability (CIGEV) and the report for the Leenaards Foundation, which funded the data collection, was finalised.

Finally, the last research axis is related to the paper-and-pencil questionnaire on social cognition that was distributed during wave 9. Data was prepared for the public release, and a methodological report was written.

Grant applications

The Swiss SHARE team worked on two grant applications in 2024. It applied to the European Era4Health call to fund the implementation of the Harmonised Cognitive Assessment Protocol (HCAP) data collection in five SHARE countries, including Switzerland. The application was led by the Swiss SHARE team with the collaboration of four SHARE countries – Austria, Latvia, Poland, and Romania – and the CIGEV. The proposal was, however, unsuccessful. In addition, the Swiss SHARE team worked on the application for its renewed SNSF funding, which, due to considerable changes in the application template and the scope of required information, required mobilising significantly more resources than previous renewal applications.

2.3 Political surveys

In 2024, the Political Surveys team (POLS) focused on operational tasks, research activities, outreach to promote POLS data, and networking. Collaborations with international networks such as CCS, CSES, CNES, and MEDem are detailed in [Chapter 5. Scientific collaborations](#).

Operational tasks In the first half of 2024, the POLS team engaged in the preparation and documentation of the various data collected for the 2023 Swiss Election Study (Selects 2023). In June 2024, all Selects 2023 data were published in SWISSUbase. This release includes the first three waves of an ongoing online panel survey (valid interviews in wave 1 = 8 197; wave 2 = 6 077; wave 3 = 5 579), the online/paper post-election survey (N = 5 033 valid interviews), the online/paper candidate survey (N = 2 527), and a media study featuring automated content analysis of over 100 print and online news outlets (N = 698 607 articles). Because Selects is part of international networks, a subset of the postelection dataset was adapted to align with the guidelines and requirements of the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) and submitted to the CSES headquarters for inclusion in the next release of the Module 6 comparative datafile. Similarly, data from the Swiss candidate survey was specifically prepared to be included in the Module 3 datafile of the Comparative Candidate Survey (CCS).

Between April and September, the team prepared the fieldwork for wave 4 of the Selects online panel, which spans over the years 2023–2027 and will eventually consist of seven waves in total. This work primarily involved questionnaire development and translation, as well as communication with respondents. Fieldwork was conducted between late September and early November, with respondents from wave 3 invited to participate in the new survey wave. After data cleaning, a total of 4 933 valid interviews remained, corresponding to a retention rate of 89%. In addition to the standard panel questions, the questionnaire included a module on affective polarization proposed by researchers. The data release is scheduled for early February 2025 on SWISSUbase.

In the second year of the SNSF-funded research project “Swiss Direct Democracy in the 21st century” ([DDS21.ch](#)), which runs from 2023 to 2027, four cross-sectional post-vote surveys (CSS2–5) were conducted following the federal popular votes in March, June, September, and November (see [Chapter 6. Methodological Research](#)). At the end of each survey, respondents are recruited in a feed-in long-term panel, resulting in the organisation of four long-term panel waves in 2024 (LTP2–5). In these four popular votes, Swiss citizens decided on a total of 12 referendums or initiatives. Additionally, two short-term panels were carried out before the June and September votes. All data collection is

managed by the Data Collection and Analysis (DCA) team at FORS, while the POLS team leader contributes to questionnaire development and testing, as well as methodological developments and analyses.

Research activities and outreach

POLS team members actively engaged in research and public outreach activities. Alongside the publication of all [Selects 2023 data](#), a brochure (available in German, French, and Italian) analysing voter turnout and party choice in the 2023 federal elections was presented at a well-attended media conference in Bern in June. The main findings received extensive coverage across all three language regions on public radio and TV stations, as well as in numerous newspapers. Team members not only gave numerous media interviews but were also invited to discuss key insights with several national parties.

Additionally, POLS team members showcased ongoing research based on Selects data at national and international scientific conferences. Topics included public perceptions of class representation in Switzerland and the impact of multiple crises on EU support, among others. Several papers are currently under review for publication in peer-reviewed international journals. POLS team members are also co-editing a Special Issue on the 2023 National Elections, set to be published in 2026 in the *Swiss Political Science Review*. A call for papers, launched in early July, received wide attention. Out of 19 submitted proposals, 16 were selected for presentation at an author workshop in April 2025. All POLS members are contributing to one or more of the selected papers.

Networking

POLS actively engaged in networking activities with other national election studies, particularly those from neighbouring countries. In March, POLS members attended the annual meeting with the German and Austrian national election studies in Vienna, where they discussed institutional developments and key methodological challenges facing election studies and presented new findings from Selects.

A POLS member also launched a similar initiative to regularly convene election studies from francophone regions. For the first time, representatives of the Swiss, Belgian, French, Luxembourgish, and Quebecois election studies met in Brussels in October to discuss shared challenges faced by election studies in multilingual countries, as well as the unique characteristics of electoral behaviour in French-speaking regions.

3. Data Management and Archive services (DMAS)

In 2024, the unit changed its name to DMAS from DARISS, where DMAS signifies “Data Management and Archive Services”. The change was made after long reflection and to keep up with developments within the larger research environment. In particular, the new name reflects the growing importance of data management in the Swiss landscape, the central role of archiving in our work, as well as the increasing value placed on service by our target community.

DMAS staff coordinated the swissuniversities-funded project recORD, “recognise Open Research Data”, which was set to run from January to December 2024, but which received a no-cost extension until March 2025. The [recORD](#) project aims at fostering a joint position across HEIs and funders in Switzerland to better recognise contributions to Open Research Data (ORD) in three areas: proposal assessment, career assessment, and institutional assessment. ZHAW is the leading house of the project. In total, the project involved 13 Swiss Higher Education institutions, the SNSF, and FORS. Throughout the year, three national workshops were organised to develop a set of recommendations regarding the three assessment types. Beyond the coordination of the project, FORS provided a [literature review](#) as well as a [landscape analysis](#). The latter involved the collection of primary data, which are available for re-use via [SWISSUbase](#).

Another swissuniversities-funded project – SwissDS-ENV – continued in 2024, with the involvement of DMAS staff in collaboration with the UNIL, the University of Zurich, and Geneva. The project aims to develop an accredited national CAS training course for data stewards and research support staff in data management. Along with other institutional partners, DMAS co-created and taught transversal lessons in reproducibility, data sharing, and data handling. DMAS also began development of particular lessons within the CAS for the social sciences, which will be administered in spring of 2025 (see below).

In addition to the national projects described above, DMAS staff members were also involved in various international activities, including the European project RITrainPlus, which aims to create an accredited training programme for managers of research infrastructures. DMAS staff were responsible for the course on data policy and data management, which was administered as a second edition in November. Within CESSDA, DMAS participated in two working groups, one on data citation and the other on access to sensitive data. Results from work within these groups were discussed within an expert seminar (data citation) and a dedicated session (sensitive data) within the first CESSDA conference, held in June in Split, Croatia.

Data Archive Services (DAS)

In 2024, the DAS group celebrated the publication of the 1 000th social science dataset published in SWISSUbase. 150 datasets were published in 2024, compared to 104 in 2023. Among those, 130 were new datasets, and 20 were updates of existing datasets due to new data or corrections.

2 213 social science datasets were downloaded from SWISSUbase in 2024, compared to 2 322 in 2023 (see [Chapter 8. Performance Indicators](#)). 80% of the social science datasets were downloaded for research, 10% for teaching, and 7% for research and teaching. For 4% of the downloads, the data recipient did not indicate a purpose. 32% plan to publish based on the data they downloaded. The DAS group guided researchers at numerous institutions in Switzerland and abroad in best practices for archiving and sharing their research data. There is a strong demand for individual consultancy for data archiving, in particular with respect to sensitive data and data protection requirements. Overall, social science data got more complex, which requires careful handling during the curation process. Through individual consultancies throughout the data deposit process, DAS ensures that the archived data is of high quality, meets the FAIR requirements, and has strong re-use potential. In 2024, DAS handled new incoming data and has also started to reestablish contact with researchers who had started but not finalised the deposit process.

Data dissemination is another important part of the mission of DAS. The group regularly helps researchers, teaching staff, and students find data for their purposes. To remain up-to-date with recent developments of SWISSUbase as well as the social science data landscape, DAS continued with the updating of its workflow and documentation relative to data deposit, archiving, and access at FORS. Amongst others, an additional user contract was established that allows the re-use of non-anonymised data.

As in previous years, DAS contributed to the SWISSUbase Operational Group and Steering Committee, which works within the consortium towards the design, development, and testing of new platform features. This is crucial to improve the user experience. Drawing on in-depth experience of data curation and archiving, DAS plays a major role in the consortium.

In order to enhance services for users, DAS also continued to develop its expertise in various topics related to data archiving and re-use, including data citation. In addition, DAS continued to maintain and promote the FORS Replication Service and encouraged 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 project RiTrainPlus.

Promotion

Data Management Services (DMS)

As part of its active data solicitation strategy, the DMS group continued to reach out to the PIs of newly funded SNSF projects, as well as pursued its efforts to reach out to the field of education. In particular, we organised and contributed to a symposium on Open Research in Education at the Conference of the European Educational Research Association in August in Nicosia.

To promote our services and our data, we also reinforced our outreach and networking efforts in 2024. This was achieved by contributing to the establishment of new FORS initiatives, such as the launch of SSHOC-CH, but also by reaching out more systematically to key stakeholders with institutional, disciplinary, and/or strategic influence within the Swiss social science research landscape. In particular, we actively participated in initiatives of national importance, such as the Swiss Research Data Support Network (SRDSN) and the SWISSUbase DSU Network. Not only did we attend annual meetings, we also contributed to specific nodes, such as the Data Steward coordination network and the personal and sensitive data node of the SRDSN, as well as the planning of the 2025 Love data week. We also attended strategic national events, such as the Swiss RDM Support community meeting in Bern, the Open science days in Lausanne, as well as the Swiss Research Data Day in Chur, where we presented a paper.

Following the same logic of extending our network and positioning ourselves within the Open Science Swiss landscape, we actively contributed to the recORD project, and took part in two new swissuniversities mandates, to be finalised in 2025. They consist in drafting reports (landscape analyses) on the topics of a) establishing ORD expertise as an independent career path at HEIs by 2028, and b) establishing a framework for systematic communication between trainers and data stewards to facilitate professionalisation and the exchange of experiences, best practices, needs and training modules.

As a way to better promote our services and SWISSUbase, we also continued offering workshops and presentations to both the research community and data stewards (see the section on data management below).

Data management

As in previous years, the group continued to develop and provide advanced data management training during 2024. In particular, we contributed to the development and teaching of a summer school course, given in the context of the [Lugano Summer School in Social Science Methods](#). FORS developed lessons on data privacy and ethics, data sharing, and replication and reproducibility. The course was given both online in late August, and in person in Lugano at

the end of November. We were also very strongly involved in the CAS in data stewardship, whose first edition was launched in October 2024 and will end in June 2025. Not only did we contribute to lessons of the transversal module, with some of the teaching already carried out in 2024, but we also developed new and advanced contents for the social science module, which will be taught in May and June 2025. The CAS provided us with the opportunity of developing new advanced materials on key topics such as documentation, data management planning, disciplinary differences, informed consent, anonymisation, legal and ethical issues around sensitive data, and data sharing.

On top of this, we also launched a new collaboration with [DaSCH](#), the Swiss National Data and Service Center for the Humanities, which consists in a series of webinars on key data management practices. The first webinar took place in November and focused on data management planning from the perspectives of the social sciences and humanities. We also started working on the second joint webinar, to be provided early February 2025, and which will focus on the FAIR and CARE principles.

We also collaborated with a team of researchers from the Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW) and the University Psychiatry Clinics (UPK) in Basel to deposit a joint SNSF proposal, which would be based on the reuse of qualitative data. If funded, this would provide valuable hands-on experience to FORS when it comes to reusing interview data, and would result in a practical handbook of best practices for the social science community.

Finally, we attended different presentations and trainings throughout the year to further develop expertise on key topics such as ethics and legal considerations, and in particular the handling of sensitive data. Linked to this, we conducted an internal reflection on the practices of DMAS when it comes to complying with data protection laws. This was carried out as part of a larger mandate at the FORS level, which we coordinated, and which involved mandating an external local DPO company to conduct an audit of our policies and practices with respect to applicable data protection laws. The main deliverables, a gap analysis and a template for the registry of processing operations will be finalised early 2025.

Other contributions included:

- » A presentation of dataGo during the love data week online (February)
- » A presentation on data documentation at the UNIL (April)
- » A workshop on data management best practices at the HES-SO (May)
- » A poster on the FORS replication service at the Reproducibility Conference in Zurich (June)
- » A presentation on data stewards and the integration of open science in higher education at the Swiss Research Data Day 2024 in Chur (October)

- » A workshop on FORS services and the use of SWISSUbase at the University of Basel (October)
- » A course on data anonymisation as part of the CAS in data stewardship at the UNIL (October)
- » 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

IT developments In 2024, the IT group made significant progress across multiple projects with multiple important accomplishments such as the migration of Swiss Household Panel (SHP) application into the Survey Management Tool (SMT), the deployment of salesforce, the migration of all the infrastructure to Kubernetes and a major technical upgrade of SWISSUbase.

During the first half of the year, the SHP application was successfully migrated to the SMT platform. This transition was followed by the development of substantial improvements of the application targeting productivity gains and the search tool on the FORS website, before the platform moved into an active maintenance phase.

Efficiency gains were further realised through the deployment of Salesforce Sales Cloud and Service Cloud to support survey execution processes within the DCA team.

FORS continued its collaboration with CESSDA on the European Question Bank initiative, playing the lead role in gathering requirements and designing the technical integrations. The IT group also maintained its active participation in the DDI developers' group activities.

The infrastructure modernisation was a key accomplishment for 2024. All virtual machines were migrated to UNIL's Kubernetes platform. This migration affected several systems, including SMT, 13 websites handled by the IT team, Matomo (an open-source web analytics platform), Mailwizz (an e-mail marketing application), and various internal tools, ensuring FORS's commitment to offering a robust and reliable infrastructure services for the research community.

Several websites were improved, such as [DeFacto](#), [Forscenter](#), [Survey Methods: Insights from the Field](#), [ISSP](#) and [CNES](#). Furthermore, following a thorough analysis of FORS's mailing practices, Postmark, an email delivery service, was integrated with Mailwizz to conceive a reliable campaign management solution.

Compliance with the New Federal Act on Data Protection was rigorously addressed. The IT group, together with the FORS Communications Officer, reviewed and adapted its practices for managing personal data and mailing communications, resulting in the development of new privacy policies for all FORS websites. Non-compliant third-party components on the websites were also replaced, demonstrating FORS's commitment to data protection and ethical standards.

An evaluation of the accounting software was conducted, leading to the decision to replace Microsoft Business Central with Office Maker at the beginning of 2025.

SWISSUbase

SWISSUbase is the archiving and sharing platform and service, developed in collaboration with the UNIL and the University of Zurich, 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 original 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 across its four faculties. In April 2024, a contractual agreement was signed between the members of the SWISSUbase consortium and DaSCH as a collaborating partner providing nationwide data support and curation for humanities researchers.

SWISSUbase currently has over 6 800 active users and features over 12 380 projects and over 1 100 datasets. In 2024, SWISSUbase counted 2 190 downloads of datasets with a restricted contract and 409 downloads of datasets with a creative commons license.

During 2024, the focus was on making the metadata of linguistics data in SWISSUbase harvestable by the CLARIN Virtual Language Observatory and to expand the login options for international researchers. Search engine optimisation (SEO) was also enhanced to improve the FAIRification of SWISSUbase and the versioning system for projects and datasets was updated. Major efforts were undertaken to decrease the platform's technical debt, therefore reducing the implementation of extended functionalities.

A new info website has also been set up to inform the research community about the SWISSUbase Consortium, the platform and the services. Additionally, it features an extensive Help Centre with step-by-step guides, answers to specific questions, and a wealth of resources to provide the best experience to SWISSUbase users.

Aiming at further strengthening the services that are an integral part of the platform, two SWISSUbase DSU Network Sessions were held in 2024 to discuss and collaborate on several data curation topics.

The SWISSUbase team also conducted a workshop for the Steering Committee on the strategy for gathering user feedback. A hands-on training session was held to onboard DaSCH members as the newly established DSU for the Humanities on a national level.

Some promotional activities were carried out: several workshops in collaboration with the UNIL for members of the geosciences community and a SWISSUbase presentation in collaboration with LaRS for the psychology community at the University of Zurich. SWISSUbase has also been active on LinkedIn to regularly promote news, features, published datasets and events.

FORS joined the project team for the Swiss Research Data Support Network (SRDSN) within the framework of the action line B5.3 of swissuniversities' Open Science Programme. The INDEV Data Tools and Services group (DTS) led the work package "Technical infrastructure: internal communication & collaboration" in 2024. During 2024, the DTS group has also been involved in the swissuniversities mandate B5.1 "Establish and maintain/update Swiss-wide best practices of ORD expertise" together with other members of the SRDSN.

Collaboration with other data infrastructures

DaSCH

In April 2024, a contractual agreement was signed between the members of the SWISSUbase consortium and DaSCH, the Swiss National Data and Service Center for the Humanities, as a collaborating partner, providing nationwide data support and curation for humanities researchers. An introductory workshop on SWISSUbase data curation workflows was held for DaSCH data curators. The Humanities metadata schema has been under review by the DaSCH team and will be implemented in 2025.

FAIR Metadata Working Group

The FAIR Metadata Working Group was established to improve the quality of metadata from data providers that play a key role in the Swiss Open Data Ecosystems. The initiative aims to implement concrete solutions to overcome the current problems and to promote the secondary use of FAIR data for research and education in Switzerland. The DTS group is a member of this Working Group along with other members such as SWITCH, the SFSO, the Swiss Institute of Bioinformatics, DaSCH and the University libraries of Lausanne and Zurich, amongst others.

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 collaboration with other data infrastructures and organises scientific (meta) data sustainably across disciplines to make it widely accessible, interoperable and valuable. The Oversight Board has agreed in 2023 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. Several follow-up meetings with SWITCH have taken place in 2024 to establish a roadmap for the integration of the Connectome API into SWISSUbase in 2025.

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 make the final alignments regarding the data production and the data curation workflows as well as the specifications of the API that allows for the integration and automatic ingest of linguistic data into SWISSUbase. The API was deployed to production in Spring 2024.

5. Scientific collaborations

Host university

The UNIL hosts FORS, providing crucial in-kind contributions such as office space, IT support, and human resources services for its more than 60 staff members. Additionally, the university funds a joint research programme that supports the employment of 14 staff members—partially or fully—across various levels, amounting to 12 full-time equivalents (FTEs). Three FORS staff members also hold professorial positions within the SSP Faculty.

This collaborative research programme DReMSS (Developments in Research and Methods of the Social Sciences) aims to strengthen the reputation of both FORS and the UNIL as leading institutions in social science research, both nationally and internationally. It focuses on enhancing quantitative expertise in Switzerland, advancing survey methodologies, fostering innovation in social science research, and promoting dialogue among key stakeholders in social science methods. Within this programme joint activities are further developed. The programme operates under a formal agreement between FORS and the SSP Faculty, with oversight from a steering committee (“Comité de pilotage”) composed of three members from each institution. This committee convenes multiple times a year to guide the programme’s development. Each year, the programme produces numerous publications and scientific papers based on FORS-generated data. The visibility of these research outputs has been enhanced through a [dedicated website](#) launched in 2022 and through the annual report also publicly available on the website. Faculty members from the SSP frequently participate in FORS events, while FORS researchers contribute significantly to methodological teaching within the SSP Faculty.

Policy dialogue and national coordination

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

In April 2024, FORS was involved in founding SSHOC-CH (Social Sciences & Humanities Open Cluster – Switzerland) as an own association (www.sshoc.ch). The objective of SSHOC-CH is to facilitate the exchange and collaboration of research infrastructures to support researchers and their projects, identify and leverage synergies, and, where feasible, develop joint platforms and services or improve the interoperability of existing ones. The FORS Director was elected as first president of the association. SSHOC-CH serves as a framework for establishing new research infrastructures while also fostering connections with SSHOC at the European level and other national clusters. More than 60 representatives from national research infrastructures and other individuals

joined the new association in 2024. While establishing the association was a key activity of the board, SSHOC-CH also organised an information event for the Swiss SSH community on the upcoming national infrastructure roadmap process.

Another significant area is the secondary use of existing data for research. The Federal Department of Justice put in place an expert group to accompany the establishment of a new law for secondary use of data and FORS was invited to participate in this working group. The expert group had several meetings in 2024 and a draft law should be presented by the end of 2025. 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.

Furthermore, FORS participates in the Swiss National Open Research Data (ORD) Strategy Council's Sounding Board of Service Providers (StraCo), which is 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. The Sounding Board finished its work on a paper [Enhancing Open Research Data in Switzerland. Analysis and recommendations from the ORD Sounding Board of Service Providers](#) in 2024 and the paper was published in January 2025. By the end of 2024, the Head of the FORS infrastructure and development unit INDEV was nominated as the new Chair of the Sounding Board for a two-year term.

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 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.
- » “Recognise ORD (recORD)”, Martien Jaekel (ZHAW) with involvement of Marieke Heers (FORS) and many other partners. The project performed an analysis of best practices in ORD recognition.
- » “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.
- » SSHOC-CH

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 was selected to host the ISSP Secretariat for a second term from 2024–2027. The Secretariat is appointed for a period of three years 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 which includes organising the general assembly and participate in the CCS Board. FORS ensures the integration and harmonisation of the CCS data, and the data are published on [SWISSUbase](#). CCS developed the Module 4 of this comparative study in 2024 that will be in the field in the coming years for candidate surveys, and a second release of the Module 3 comparative dataset was finalised and is available through 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 to host the 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. The CNES activities 2024 included the launch of an [online seminar series](#), submitted a proposal for a COST Action and released a [knowledge bank](#) with information on election studies in December 2024.

- » 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 to aim for ESFRI roadmap status in 2026. FORS, alongside with the UNIL, will host the “Centre for Survey Data” as part of the MEDem consortium. MEDem by now has a broad support from many countries, research institutions, projects, and individual researchers. The submission to ESFRI will be due in April 2025. To strengthen the research agenda of MEDem, FORS organised and hosted a workshop with participation of different leading scholars from the field in December 2024.
- » FORS is collaborating with the UNIL and researchers in Switzerland to become part of the **Gender and Generations Programme (GGP)**, that made it on the ESFRI roadmap in 2022 and 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 Swiss National Science Foundation. However, how to fund GGP was still not resolved in 2024.
- » The **SERI** has taken over the **official representation** of Switzerland in the **social science European Research Infrastructure Consortiums (ERIC) CESSDA, ESS and SHARE** in 2023 after this representation for many years previously had been delegated to FORS. Switzerland created the legal conditions for full membership of ERICs in 2022 and CESSDA was among the first ERICs to which Switzerland applied for full membership, which was granted. For the time being Switzerland remains an observer in SHARE and ESS, but may also apply for full membership of these ERICs in the near future. FORS staff nevertheless remains active in 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 represents 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).
- » In 2024, in collaboration with colleagues from other CESSDA service providers, DMAS successfully transitioned the **CESSDA Resource Directory** – a curated inventory designed to support the activities of data archive professionals—from the Zotero platform to the CESSDA webpage. This

transition significantly improved the directory's accessibility, visibility, and functionality, as it now features advanced search capabilities powered by rich metadata.

- » In 2024, DMAS also led the **CESSDA Data Citation Key Topic Working Group**, which included members from 11 CESSDA service providers. The primary objective of the working group is to enhance data citation practices within the academic community by enabling and facilitating data citation and promoting their interoperability. Key activities in 2024 included organising the CESSDA expert seminar, developing the CESSDA Recommendations on Data Citation, and conducting an in-depth analysis of current data citation practices among CESSDA service providers. In addition, FORS participated in the CESSDA Sensitive Data Working Group, where synergies are sought for solutions to improve access to sensitive data within research infrastructures.
- » **RiTrainPlus:** the FORS archive team and the head of DMAS completed a fourth 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 autumn 2024, a second important milestone was reached by successfully conducting the second edition of the pilot courses. This achievement involved the active involvement of 25 international professionals and generated valuable feedback for future editions.

6. Methodological Research

FORS collaborators and associated researchers were actively involved in methodological research while at the same time carrying out primary tasks, such as designing questionnaires and surveys, collecting, processing and documenting data, and publishing and reviewing papers, and writing proposals. With four peer-reviewed articles and thirteen presentations at conferences and workshops, 2024 was another successful year which would not have been possible without the strong commitment to methodological research of all FORS collaborators in the surveys unit. This research provides valuable insights into how to maintain or improve survey quality while reducing the cost of surveys produced by FORS.

Changing survey modes

The trend of moving face-to-face surveys to the web also affects the ESS. One paper examined the implications on measures of political attitudes and behaviour. Based on telephone, web, and paper questionnaires from the FORS mixed-mode experiment and face-to-face interviews from the 2012 ESS, the results do not show large mode differences in favour of face-to-face interviews for political measures. On the contrary, telephone, web and paper modes may offer more advantages in certain situations. To better understand the implications in the ESS, additional analyses were conducted in MOSAiCH, which has the same quality standards as the ESS. The results suggest that a switch to self-administered questionnaires could provide estimates of political attitudes and behaviour similar to those obtained from face-to-face interviews. A paper was presented at the ESS Congress 2024 in Lisbon and a journal article accepted in *Frontiers in Political Science*.

In the transition of household panel surveys from interviewer-based modes to web-based modes, a key unanswered question is whether web-based surveys are as successful as interviewer-based modes in keeping in contact with moved household members. Without interviewer assistance there is a risk of significant underreporting of moved household members and their new addresses in the web mode. Research based on data from the SHP IV pilot compared reports and addresses of moved household members in the SHP IV pilot (telephone/web randomly assigned) with the first waves of the SHP IV refreshment (web assigned to households without landline). The pilot showed no significant difference between the modes, suggesting no mode effects, while the refreshment sample revealed that although households in the web group contain more mobile sample members, household reference persons in the web group were less likely to report new addresses. A preliminary version of the paper was presented at the 16. Panelworkshop der Panelsurveys im deutschsprachigen Raum 2024 in Nuremberg, and the current version has been submitted to the FORS working paper series.

Researchers from FORS and the UNIL analysed the effects of web and paper mode choice in the 2019 and 2023 Selects post-election surveys by sociodemographic profile to examine the value of adding paper to correct selection biases. While age bias has decreased in 2023, language effects remain. A paper is being prepared for publication as part of the Selects 2023 special issue of the *Swiss Political Science Review*.

In addition, they examined selection and measurement differences in the web and paper modes in the ISSP Environment IV data from Switzerland and Finland. Register data were used as a benchmark to estimate selection bias in key socio-demographic variables, and to disentangle mode measurement effects from other sources of error. While age, education, and labour market status account for selection effects across modes, there are no significant differences in the measurement of environmental attitudes and behaviours across modes once the selection effect is controlled for.

The SNSF-funded post-vote project “Swiss Direct Democracy in the 21st century” (DDS21) conducts representative, probability-based web surveys following each federal popular vote. To improve response rates and representativeness and to motivate sample members to use a smartphone by facilitating survey access, one experiment tested the effect of including a QR code in the invitation letter. Being cost neutral, providing a QR code resulted in similar response rates, while the use of smartphones almost doubled with the QR code. Potential effects on sample composition and response quality remain to be analysed.

Based on experiments in the FORS Connect recruitment survey and in Selects and Selects-Civique, a thesis submitted in 2024 investigated the challenges and opportunities associated with smartphone participation in web surveys. The findings highlight the challenges of participation and representativeness and show that measurement quality is not significantly affected by the device used to conduct web surveys. It also explores the unique opportunities offered by smartphone technology, focusing on app-based surveys and data donation. These methods allow for the collection of rich, multi-dimensional data, including passive data through sensors and digital traces. Novel approaches show promise for improving the depth and accuracy of survey data, but also raise new methodological considerations for implementation in general population samples. While one paper will be resubmitted to *Information, Communication and Society*, a second is in preparation.

Changing survey incentives

Still exploring the question of whether reducing incentive costs decreases participation and retention rates, the SHP team analysed the results of an experiment on a subsample of 500 households of the SHP_II, for whom the unconditional incentive was lowered from CHF 20 to CHF 10 in 2023. The results after one wave of reduced incentives show no evidence of additional attrition at the household level, but the share of household members completing an individual questionnaire was slightly lower in the reduced incentive group. No significant differences were found by demographic characteristics, past participation patterns and characteristics typically associated with underrepresentation in surveys, such as political interest and low levels of trust. The experiment will continue with a second wave.

Advance letters are often left unopened. Features of the envelope and the format of the letter can influence whether recipients open the letter and ultimately participate in the survey. In the SHARE Wave 10 refreshment sample, a padded envelope experiment tests a thicker envelope containing a cotton bag and the usual contact letter versus a standard envelope containing only the contact letter on response rates and retention in the follow-up wave. As a face-to-face survey, SHARE provides an opportunity to gather the information if the letter was opened at the first contact. The results will be presented at the internal international SHARE meeting, the SHARE user conference, and an international methodological conference. Additionally, the findings are planned to be published in a scientific article.

Collaborators of the international surveys team at FORS and researchers from the UNIL tested whether sending a postcard with preliminary results can motivate participants to answer in MOSAiCH 2024. Half of the invited people received an infographic on a A5 postcard with 6 results from the web survey, the other half did not. Results show a significant positive effect on participation. For web respondents, the effect is immediate; for paper respondents, the results have an effect only on the slow paper respondents. Following these results, this measure will be implemented for the whole sample in future editions. The results of the experiment will be investigated in more detail as part of a newly funded SNSF project titled “Digital Trust: Understanding and addressing its impact on digital data collection in surveys”. The project will use data from a module of questions accepted for inclusion in MOSAiCH to investigate how components of digital trust relate to willingness to participate in app-based surveys, and to test alternative “trust-building” methods aimed to increase participation.

Testing design features to increase participation and retention

Extended analyses of data from the FORS Connect recruitment survey focused on the mechanisms by which variables related to digital trust influence survey participation decisions, and were presented at the 2024 AAPOR conference. The results also form the foundation of the SNSF-funded Digital Trust project, in which UNIL and FORS researchers will collaborate on the analysis of data from the 2024 MOSAiCH survey on Digital Societies and future “trust-building” experiments in the FORS Connect Panel.

The Digital Trust project will investigate non-observation bias in web surveys and willingness to participate in app-based surveys. These analyses will be extended using data from the Swiss Federal Statistical Office’s Omnibus surveys on internet use, which provides a benchmark for assessing the extent of selection errors in MOSAiCH. Additionally, new data from the seed-funded pilot time use survey experiment, Daily LIVES, will contribute to this research field in the coming year. This study tests the MOTUS (“Modular Time Use Survey”) research platform, allowing participants to respond via a smartphone app. If funding is successfully secured, Daily LIVES is expected to be integrated into the Swiss Household Panel. Daily LIVES is currently testing different incentive strategies to increase low response due to response burden, in addition to alternative data collection platforms and time use diary tools.

While it is well-known that it is more difficult to obtain panel consent in self-administered modes compared to interviewer-based modes, how to ask for this consent is largely unknown. In the Selects panel 2019–2023, three options to ask for panel consent were experimentally compared: choice (yes/no), opt-in, and opt-out. The opt-out option yields higher panel consent rates than the other two options. Based on socio-demographic variables, panel consenters are most similar to panel non-consenters in the choice design, followed by the opt-in design, and most different in the opt-out design. Based on typically biased variables such as political interest or how the survey was perceived, however, the opt-out design performs better than the opt-in design, followed by the choice design. When it comes to actually participating in the first follow-up wave, the three-panel consent options work reproduce these results. Overall, these results speak in favour of the opt-out design, followed by the opt-in design when opt-out is legally not possible. This paper is in print in *Survey Research Methods*.

In the DDS21 post vote survey, another experiment tested the effect of a prenotification letter on response rates and sample composition. The prenotification letter required less information to be included in the main invitation. The latter could focus on practical details: login information for the online survey, a mention of the raffle for participants, and hotline contact information. Response rates were about four percentage points higher in the sample that received the prenotification letter. However, being not cost-neutral, cost issues need to be investigated.

FORS analysed data from a GPS survey as part of the Panel Lémanique project in 2023 and presented the main experiences at an internal Methods and Research Meeting in 2024. The presentation outlined what can be done with GPS tracking, shared experiences with other researchers who have used or are interested in using GPS data, and stimulated a debate on best practices for integrating GPS tracking into surveys, while emphasizing the importance of balancing technological innovation with scientific integrity and ethical responsibility. Challenges include ethical issues raised by GPS tracking, the need for well-trained and well-staffed respondent support, the management of large volumes of complex data, and the resolution of problems associated with data gaps and variations in the timing of administration.

Representation, Measurement and Equivalence issues

The international surveys team continued its representativeness studies, extending standard practice of focusing on socio-demographic variables from the frame and the population. Data included a) the EVS 2017 multi-design experiment, b) the multi-part MOSAiCH 2020 including an experiment on incentives and c) the Covid online panel following MOSAiCH 2020. The research resulted in a session with several presentations by FORS/LIVES members on 10 years of experience of switching from face-to-face to web/paper mode and varying incentives at the ESS Conference in Lisbon, as well as two presentations in January 2025 at the Swiss Political Science Association Conference and the Swiss Population Research Conference. Research on representation has also been extended to include a longitudinal aspect, i.e., to examine how response bias changes over time, with a special focus on the effect that the paper questionnaire adds to the web questionnaire. Results are expected in 2025.

Based on experiments conducted in face-to-face surveys between 2006 and 2014, the International Surveys team developed a non-respondent survey (NRS) for MOSAiCH 2024. As the central theme of the ISSP module was “Digital Society” and the main mode was web, there were concerns about the representation of people not in tune with the digital aspects of our society. Consequently, and in contrast to previous research that has primarily examined non-response driven by attitudes (especially political), this research focused on non-response patterns driven by web access and literacy. Although the paper mode was offered as a follow-up, the topic may have discouraged such people from participating. About 10% of the non-respondents returned the NRS, significantly less than the self-completion NRS after a face-to-face survey with an additional incentive. A mode change or additional incentives were impossible for financial reasons. Preliminary results show that the profile of these people is very close to that of the Part 1 paper respondents. The results will be presented at the ESRA 2025.

Election surveys are often challenged by the overrepresentation of politically interested individuals, leading to a bias in key survey estimates related to political behaviour. To address this issue, an experiment was conducted in the first wave of the 2023 Selects panel in which the topic of the survey was framed differently. The treatment group was informed that the topic of the survey was about the upcoming federal elections, while the control group was told that it was about current social and political issues. The results show that this manipulation (1) worked well in the first wave, but that more control group respondents left the survey in the second wave, (2) helped to recruit more non-voters, albeit insignificantly, and (3) mitigated the problem of underrepresenting the far-right party. A paper abstract was accepted for the Special Issues Selects 2023 of the *Swiss Political Science Review*.

Social stratification is interested in unequal life chances and assumes the existence of a hierarchy of occupations. However, occupations are not easily translated into a linear hierarchical measure. Influential scales combine multiple indicators and lack intuitive interpretation. Researchers from FORS, UNIL, and Stockholm University constructed a new scale based on occupations' median earnings (occupations earnings potential - OEP), calculated as percentiles of the overall earnings structure: if mechanics earn the national median wage, their OEP is 50. National OEP scales were constructed using annual microdata pooled over several decades for Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK and the US. Consistent with the Treiman constant, these national scales are highly correlated over time and across countries, justifying the use of one common OEP scale. The common OEP scale works as well for countries used to construct the scale as for countries not used. Moreover, it is associated with the causes (education) and consequences (social mobility) that the theory expects. OEP is a simple and cost-effective indicator of economic advantage that can be meaningfully interpreted. A working paper has been published at the European Commission's science and knowledge service and a manuscript was submitted to the *European Sociological Review*.

The SHP and researchers from the UNIL developed a composite measure of subjective wellbeing to improve the efficiency and comparability of research using the SHP. They demonstrated that psychometrically robust wellbeing measures can be derived using individual items of the SHP, capturing two subcomponents: 1) positive affect and life satisfaction, and 2) negative affect. Their use in future studies, in addition to or instead of individual items, may help to improve the comparability of research based on the SHP. The results were published as a [FORS Working paper](#).

Work on gender measurement in quantitative surveys was continued between FORS and the UNIL and a FORS Guide summarising current best practice will be published in 2025. Two presentations were given at the Swiss Sociological Association Congress in Basel. The discussions confirmed both the importance of these methodological issues and the need for clear, evidence-based

recommendations. In addition, a new FORS Guide project on survey inclusivity was adopted. The theoretical approaches were tested using the Experimental Panel and the SES Panel, providing empirical validation of the methodological recommendations. These interrelated activities contribute to the development of more accurate and inclusive measures in surveys, paving the way for surveys that better represent the diversity of our society, while maintaining the scientific rigour necessary for quantitative research.

Related to this research, members from FORS and the UNIL used the gender indicators integrated into the MOSAiCH 2022 survey, to examine the association between social position, identity, beliefs and experiences related to gender relations. The aim was to reflect on the validity of gender indicators present in other databases produced by FORS.

Members of the “Data Diversity and Public Good Research” group within the FORS-UNIL research programme DReMSS have developed a FORS Guide that focuses on how methodological practices and dissemination policies produce cumulative filters throughout the survey life cycle, acting as barriers to the representation of unusual social experiences. A reflexive approach was proposed to observe how and why some of these filters make it less likely that minority populations become study samples, that non-normative events are reported by participants or noticed by researchers, and that “atypical” data are not stored, shared, and reused. The aim is to raise awareness of these issues and promote greater inclusivity in social research, ensuring that non-normative events and diverse data are more effectively represented, shared, and reused for the public good.

New initiatives

Together with colleagues from the University of Bern, FORS has explored the use of multiple imputation to analyse data collected using a matrix design. Using data from the mixed-mode matrix design experiment in the EVS 2017, they investigated how much data is needed to draw valid conclusions. They showed that using multiple imputation can be used to estimated even models for which no observation remains due to a matrix design. The research was expanded to include the aspect of non-response and to investigate whether multiple imputation can correct for representation bias in practical settings. A further step will be to compare the feasibility/usability and effectiveness of using weights or multiple imputation in situations of representation bias.

Two researchers from FORS and the UNIL published a pedagogical primer on fixed effects to help scholars from social science discipline other than economics and sociology to understand this tool. The primer is published on the OSF platform and was submitted to *Advances in Methods and Practices in Psychological Science*.

To improve user-friendliness, the SHP provided user data files combining information from all waves in a long file data format, in addition to a user guide to document the long files. This process included work on data harmonisation of individual-level variables, household-level variables/file and activity calendar in a monthly format, taking into account changes in question wording, filters, or response categories.

Researchers from FORS and the UNIL developed the Transmission Chain Experiment (TCE), a quantitative interactionist survey system designed to generate non-standardised responses to open-ended questions, whose content evolves dynamically. The basic principle is to conduct a rapid sequence of three survey waves in which the first respondent's answer is used as a question for the second respondent, whose answer, in turn, becomes a question for the third respondent. Using data from the methodological survey "PANELXP" conducted at FORS, the aim of our research is to construct a factorial map of representations that can be analysed in terms of its structural form and evolutionary dynamics. To this end, topic analysis and sequence analysis techniques were used. In a second initiative, the international survey team is 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 provides services covering the entire survey lifecycle to the research community, as well as to academic institutions, the public sector, and non-profit organisations. These services serve multiple purposes. While they offer a valuable additional funding source for FORS, their primary aim is to train and maintain staff in the key competencies required to carry out high-quality, reference-standard surveys.

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 2024:

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. Three waves took place in 2024. The first was regarding winter leisure activities, as a comparison with the summer activities survey conducted in autumn 2023. About 5 200 people were contacted by email from the canton of Vaud between March 5 and April 5. The number of complete responses was about 1 800. The second wave was on the acceptability and preferences regarding urbanistic measures and projects. A focal point of the method was a discrete choice experiment with scenarios and images. About 11 100 persons from the Geneva Lake region in Switzerland and France were contacted between 27 May and 30 July, by letter or email. About 4 300 complete responses were received. Finally, the Mobility Wave took place between 29 October and January 2025 among the same population. This was a repetition of the first wave of the project in order to identify changes in mobility and housing. About 3 950 complete responses were received.

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 March and September of 2024, with about 4 000 respondents contacted in each and yielding a response rate of 52% and 60% respectively for waves 4 and 5. In both waves, a methodological experiment was conducted, which varied different days and times of day of contacting respondents, depending on their previous response behaviour.

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

The Swiss Direct Democracy in the 21st Century (DDS-21) project seeks to the understanding of how citizens form opinions and make voting decisions in direct democratic processes, focusing on Switzerland while also addressing broader contexts. The study explores four underexamined factors: the impact of advertisements and digital media in voting campaigns, and the influence of citizens' moral attitudes and political sophistication. It is a collaboration between the political science departments of the Universities of Zurich, Bern, Lausanne, and Basel, along with FORS. In 2024, four survey waves were conducted, one following each federal popular vote in Switzerland. Each wave consisted of a new sample of approximately 11 000 participants (CSS), and a long-term panel survey (LTP) targeting respondents from previous waves, which included 7 632 participants by the end of 2024. Surveys were conducted via postal invitations with reminders for CSS participants and email for LTP respondents. Additionally, a smaller short-term panel (STP) was conducted, with one wave following the June vote and another after the September vote.

Study on Eating Habits in Switzerland (SES), University of Zurich 2023 – 2027

The *Studie über Ernährungsgewohnheiten in der Schweiz (SES)* is funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation, focusing on meat consumption among German-speaking Swiss residents. Established in 2024 at the University of Zurich, the 2.5-year study examines eating habits, habits, and motivations behind meat consumption and reduction. The project includes five core questionnaire waves, three survey bursts, and an experimentally designed intervention. FORS was commissioned to oversee data collection. The first wave (W1) invited over 17,000 participants via postal mail, while the first burst (B1) targeted about 3 100 individuals who met specific criteria from W1, contacted daily for 21 days via SMS or email. A gamification incentive encouraged participation in the burst,

with monetary rewards based on survey completion levels. Data collection for W1 ran from September to October, with about 4 500 complete responses recorded. The B1 burst followed from October to November, generating over 39 000 daily survey responses, with about 58% responding at least for two weeks and 32% to all three weeks.

Survey on Past Doctoral Students, 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 2024 survey targeted doctoral graduates from 2021 and was conducted during autumn and winter. Approximately 320 individuals were invited to participate, with a response rate of around 32%. The collected data has been prepared and integrated into the cumulative dataset.

Swiss Reproducibility Network Survey (SIRRO), University of Zurich 2023 – 2024

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 was conducted in 2024 and FORS was particularly involved in the data cleaning and preparation phase.

Survey on the Implementation of Psychiatric Liaison Services - Direction générale de la cohésion sociale (DGCS), Canton of Vaud 2024

As part of a broader initiative, FORS conducted a study examining psychiatric liaison services in the Canton of Vaud, focusing on long-term care facilities and psychiatric practitioners. The research targeted 270 care institutions, including nursing homes and specialised units, and 495 geriatricians and psychiatrists. Using self-administered questionnaires, the survey gathered data on the presence of psychiatric liaison services, activity levels, reasons for use, agreement formats, response times, financing structures, unmet needs, and satisfaction levels. Data collection took place in September and October, with institutions invited via email and healthcare professionals contacted by postal mail, both methods supported by a letter from the DGCS of the Canton of Vaud. The survey received around 170 complete responses from institutions and 70 from practitioners.

Library User Survey, University of Lausanne 2024

The UNIL Library User Survey aimed to assess the usage and satisfaction levels of the library's services. The survey was designed, programmed, and distributed using LimeSurvey, with support from FORS for questionnaire development, data preparation, and analysis. Data collection took place in December 2024 and was conducted by the library, with FORS providing guidance through five collaborative workshops held throughout the project.

Witness Quiz, University of Lausanne 2024

The UNIL Witness Quiz is an interactive tool designed to help the UNIL community identify their role as bystanders in situations of sexual harassment. Built as a personality-style quiz using Qualtrics, it provides personalised insights and raises awareness about bystander intervention. FORS provided support, guidance, and programming for the quiz, which included generating a QR code shared with the UNIL administration for distribution and communication.

EvalUp: Validating a Questionnaire for Medical Device Evaluation, HEIG-VD 2024

The EvalUp project focused on validating a questionnaire designed to measure healthcare professionals' perceptions of the organisational impact of medical devices. The study involved testing the tool with staff from HUG and CHUV, focusing on three devices. FORS conducted quantitative analyses to evaluate the questionnaire's internal consistency and structural validity. The report recommended methods for further refining the questionnaire.

DEEP – Differentiated Instruction: Equity-Based, Digitally Supported Learning in Swiss Primary Schools, University of Zurich, University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland (FHNW), and Zurich University of Teacher Education 2024

The DEEP Differentiated Instruction project explores how digital tools can support equity-based differentiated instruction in Swiss primary school classrooms. It is a collaborative effort between the University of Zurich (UZH), the University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland (FHNW), and the Zurich University of Teacher Education (PHZH). FORS supported the project by advising on the sampling methodology for the planned survey, mainly in the form of a workshop and punctual assistance.

Survey on Professional Integration of Asylum Seekers in the Valais Healthcare Sector - Département de la santé, des affaires sociales et de la culture (DSSC) 2024 - 2025

Commissioned by the Département de la santé, des affaires sociales et de la culture (DSSC), the Haute École de Santé of the HES-SO Valais-Wallis initiated a project to facilitate the professional integration of asylum seekers into the healthcare sector in the canton of Valais. The project aims to recognise and leverage the skills and training of migrants, particularly those with qualifications not officially recognised in Switzerland. Within this framework, FORS was tasked with implementing the quantitative survey component of the project. The survey targeted about 220 healthcare institutions in the canton, with invitations sent via email. Data collection occurred from mid-November to mid-December. The survey received approximately 120 complete responses.

Methodological Test Time-Use Survey Data Collection Tools, University of Lausanne 2024 – 2025

FORS has started collaboration with the UNIL on testing two data collection tools for time-use surveys, aiming to assess their feasibility for large-scale implementation in Switzerland. The project focuses on occupational measures collected via time diaries and is funded by the SNSF, the UNIL, the Centre LIVES, and FORS. Data collection, set to begin in January 2025, will involve the FORS Connect Panel and a newly recruited general population sample. The study includes multiple experimental conditions to compare two platforms – a web-based tool and a mobile application – for diary entries. Participants will record activities over two days, followed by a user experience evaluation questionnaire. The project also tests various conditional and unconditional incentive models. FORS provides organisational support, including coordination with service providers, methodological advice, fieldwork monitoring and contact with respondents.

Library User Survey, ETHZ 2024 – 2025

In late 2024, the DCA conducted a survey among the ETHZ library user community of about 70 000, including external users, to evaluate the usage and satisfaction levels of library services. The DCA is in charge of the questionnaire design, data collection, and reporting. The survey was conducted between November and December and received about 5 300 complete responses, achieving a response rate of about 10%. Beyond standard quantitative analysis, the large volume of open-ended responses will be analysed using a combination of manual recoding and AI-based qualitative methods. The final report will be delivered in 2025.

Workplace and Study Climate Survey, University of Lausanne 2024 – 2025

The UNIL Workplace and Study Climate Survey examines well-being, discrimination, and sexual and psychological harassment among the entire UNIL community, including students and staff. This marks the second wave of the survey, following the first conducted in 2022. Originally planned for spring 2024, the survey was postponed to autumn 2024 due to the politically sensitive context surrounding a student occupation movement in support of Palestine. Invitations and two reminders were sent via email, with an additional follow-up message issued by the Vice-Rector for Equality. Data collection concluded in 2024, with the final report scheduled for delivery in 2025.

Staff Satisfaction Survey, HES-SO 2024 – 2025

The HES-SO Staff Satisfaction Survey evaluates workplace satisfaction among HES-SO personnel, continuing previous surveys conducted by FORS in 2018 and 2021. The questionnaire was revised and programmed and the fieldwork was initially scheduled for autumn 2024, but was finally postponed by the HES-SO administration to spring 2025.

Catering and Mobility Survey, University of Lausanne 2024 – 2025

The UNIL Catering and Mobility Survey targets the entire UNIL community to assess campus dining options and mobility habits. Started in 2024, the project involved restructuring and combining two separate questionnaires into a single, cohesive survey. Data collection is scheduled for May 2025. The survey aims to provide comprehensive insights into community needs and preferences related to catering services and mobility on campus. The report will follow later in 2025.

Ask the Patient: Improving Swiss Healthcare Value through Patient-Reported Outcomes (PROs), Zurich University of Applied Sciences 2024 – 2025

The Ask the Patient project, led by the ZHAW and funded by the SNSF, aims to enhance the quality of Swiss healthcare through the systematic use of Patient-Reported Outcomes (PROs). The project progresses in three phases: establishing a consensus on a new generic PRO measure with stakeholders, validating it through a national survey, and testing its applicability across patient groups. FORS was in charge of the national survey, involving 4 400 participants stratified by linguistic regions, age, and gender, which will take place in early 2025, with invitations and reminders sent via postal mail.

PALM 2025 Public Consultation Report, Canton of Vaud 2024 – 2025

As part of the fifth-generation Lausanne-Morges agglomeration project (PALM 2025), a public consultation was conducted between November 20 and December 31, 2024, under the framework of the Swiss Federal Guidelines for Agglomeration Projects (ARE, 2023). FORS was tasked with preparing and processing the consultation. The project followed previous collaborations in 2012 and 2016, using a refined version of earlier questionnaires, complemented by new elements specific to the 2025 edition. The survey combined informative and consultative functions, presenting the principles and actions of the PALM 2025 project while collecting evaluations, feedback, and objections from various stakeholders. The online questionnaire received 150 completed responses, with additional data collected from over 500 partially initiated but incomplete surveys, highlighting its informative role. The full report will be delivered in early 2025.

8. Outreach, output and events

8.1 Publications

FORS is committed to advancing research by promoting data sharing, reuse, and collaboration within the scientific community. Through our publications, we highlight the value of open research data (ORD) and recognise the contributions of data providers while fostering knowledge accessibility and impact. Explore all our publications and presentations here: forscenter.ch/publications/scientific-publications/.

To further support outreach and engagement, FORS promotes its public online platforms, series, and journals through a variety of communication channels, including social media, distribution lists, mailing campaigns, and newsletters. Presented below is a compilation of these resources.

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.

In 2024 the DMAS team published a new FORS Guide, *Quantitative data anonymisation: practical guidance for anonymising sensitive social science data*, offering practical strategies to address data protection challenges and facilitate the sharing of sensitive quantitative data within a strategic framework. They also updated the existing guide on Replication in the social sciences (2021), supporting robust and transparent research practices. A second FORS Guide published in 2024, *Making uncommon experiences visible in the survey life cycle*, explores how methodological practices can exclude minority populations and non-normative events. Developed by members of the “Data diversity and public good research” group within the FORS-SSP programme, this guide proposed reflexive approaches to enhance inclusivity and representation in survey research.

All FORS Guides are available online at: <https://forscenter.ch/publications/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 Centre LIVES. Its objective is to analyse transformations in various aspects such as employment, family, income, mobility, voting, and gender within the Swiss context.

The series published three contributions in 2024. The topics of the articles were diverse, covering themes such as secularisation and inclusivity in the development of local religious groups in Switzerland between 2008 and 2022, the profiles of left-party politicians in major Swiss cities from 1910 to 2020, and the impact of living costs on deepening inequality. 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 remained stable over the past year. The most viewed articles focused on the perception of professions in Switzerland (2023), the regularization of undocumented workers in Geneva (2023), redistribution through taxes and social benefits in Switzerland (2021), and the evolution and tax implications of inheritances in Switzerland since 1911 (2019). These topics highlight a strong interest in societal and economic issues within the Swiss context. Most visits came again from Switzerland, followed by France, Germany, and the United States.

DeFacto

[DeFacto](#), a platform carried by all Swiss political science institutes, has now existed for nine years. Last year, activities focused on establishing new series, organising public events, recruiting a new editorial assistant for German-speaking Switzerland, and making several improvements to the website's functions and internal organisation.

Since 2023, DeFacto has been integrated into the SVPW/ASSP, which bears financial and administrative responsibility for the platform. It is, however, still financed by contributions from various institutes. FORS continues to maintain the DeFacto website, make additional financial contributions, and actively acquire new articles.

In 2024, the number of published articles was slightly lower than in the previous year. A total of 151 articles were published, compared to 178 in 2023 – our record year. Since October 2022, articles have also been published in English, with 30 articles in 2024. DeFacto was able to slightly increase its profile in 2024 through public events and its presence on social media.

**Survey Methods:
Insights from
the Field**

The peer-reviewed international online journal *Survey Methods, Insights from the Field* (SMIF), jointly published with GESIS and Digitize!, published a total of nine articles in 2024. Eleven papers were submitted during the year, of which three were rejected. Starting in 2024, authors had the opportunity to showcase their work by publishing articles Online First before assigning them to a specific volume and issue, allowing for faster dissemination and early visibility of their research. From January to December, the website recorded 28 680 page views, similar to last year's figures, with most visits coming from the United States, followed by Germany and the United Kingdom. The most consulted articles were "Why Should We Put Weight on Weighting," "Using Facebook and Instagram to Recruit Web Survey Participants," and "Should Recall of Previous Votes Be Used to Adjust Estimates of Voting Intention?"

8.2 Events

The following events, organised by FORS, took place either in person or online in 2024.

Love Data Week Switzerland

In February, FORS actively participated in Love Data Week Switzerland with dedicated sessions aimed at enhancing researchers' understanding of data management, publication, and sharing. As part of this initiative, FORS collaborators organised a workshop titled *Publishing Your Research Data on SWISSUbase in 15 Minutes*, offering a practical demonstration for researchers at the Universities of Lausanne and Neuchâtel on how to deposit data in SWISSUbase. Another session, *Sharing Social Science Research Data via SWISSUbase*, provided an overview of data-sharing services, a demonstration of the deposit process, and hands-on guidance on handling sensitive data in social sciences. Also, a presentation on *DataGo*, a new tool designed to assess the shareability of personal and sensitive data through an archive, targeted social science researchers who have already collected their data, as well as professionals involved in data management support, such as data stewards, data librarians, and research consultants.

8th SHP Methodological Workshop

The eighth SHP Methodological Workshop at the UNIL in June focused on Sequence Data Analysis, following an introduction to the Swiss Household Panel (SHP). Led by experts from the University of Geneva, sessions covered sequence analysis fundamentals, clustering techniques, regression typologies, and handling missing data using R. The workshop attracted 24 participants, who gave highly positive feedback. For further information see [Chapter 2.1 Swiss Household Panel](#).

Press Conference on the Swiss Election Study Selects 2023

In June the results of the Swiss Election Study Selects 2023 were presented at a press conference in Bern, organised by FORS. The findings, analysing voter turnout and party preferences in the 2023 federal elections, generated significant interest and received very good [coverage](#) on public radio, television, and in newspapers across all three language regions.

FORS-DaSCH webinar series: Data Management for the Social Sciences and Humanities

FORS and DaSCH have launched a new series of free online data management webinars for researchers in the humanities and social sciences. Each webinar is co-organised by a collaborator from DaSCH and one from FORS to ensure coverage of both fields. The first session in November 2024 on *Planning Data Management* covered Open Science and data management plan (DMP) requirements, with case studies on handling images and interview data, followed by a discussion. A good number of participants registered.

The next webinar, *Applying FAIR and CARE Principles*, will take place in early 2025. More webinars are planned in the coming years.

Jointly organised by USI and FORS, the 28th Swiss Summer School on Methods in the Social Sciences took place at the Università della Svizzera Italiana in Lugano from August 8 to August 23, 2024.

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

- » **First week** (12–16 August): D. Conway - Ethnographic methods (14), T. Hills - Using Social Network Analysis to Understand Data (9), E. Horber - Multivariate Methods for Social Researchers (17), S. Kernbach - Design Thinking for Research (13), B. Lepori/A. Rocci - How to Forge Arguments in Writing (Social Sciences) Scientific Paper (10), O. Lipps/U. Kuhn - Applied Panel Data Analysis (12), A. Mira/F. Denti - Bayesian Modelling (16), V. Mottier - Discourse Theory and Analysis (20), M. Steenbergen - Introduction to Machine Learning (11), L. Walasek - Web Scraping and Data Mining in R (12).
- » **Second week** (19–23 August): L. Balachandran Nair - Conducting a Grounded Theory Study (10), M. Bergman - Mixed Methods (11), E. Davidov/P. Schmidt - Introduction to Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)* (15), J. Drzewiecka - Qualitative Analyses of Interview Data (22), M. Gibbert - Qualitative Research Designs (9), M. Grätz - Causal Analysis with Observational Data (17), T. Hills - Content Analysis and Natural Language Processing (16), K. Lobinger/P. Prieto-Blanco - Visual Data and Visual Methods for the Social Sciences (16), P. Mello - Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) (16), R. Samuel - Creating Groups from Data. Cluster Analysis and Latent Class Analysis (15).
- » **Optional two- or three-day preliminary workshops** (8–10 August): P. Gruber, Introduction to R and RStudio* (39); O. Lipps/ U. Kuhn, Introduction to Stata* (19); E. Horber, Statistics with SPSS for Social Scientists* (26); S. Kernbach, Visual Thinking for PhD Researchers (16).

Eighty percent of the 242 participants were students from Swiss and foreign universities. 57% (137) participants came from Switzerland. Participants from other countries: Germany (15), Italy (14), the Netherlands (10), United Kingdom (10), Belgium (6), Poland (5), the United States (5), Austria (4), Croatia (3), the Czech Republic (3), Hong Kong (3); 2 from Denmark, France, Israel, Japan, Latvia, Norway, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates; and single participant from Brazil, China, Finland, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Romania, Slovakia, and Spain.

The largest groups of this year's participants are working in the field of Education (15%), Business & Management (14%), Sociology (12%), Communication (12%), Political Science (8%), Psychology (8%), Public Administration (5%), Statistics (5%), Economics (5%), and Health (3%).

GREC

Established in 2017, the research group on Elections and Political Citizenship (GREC) is a research unit of the Institute of Political Studies ([IEP](#)) at 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 collaboration is particularly evident in the SNSF-funded research project "Direct Democracy in the 21st Century" ([DDS21](#)), in which GREC members from UNIL and FORS are centrally involved as co-PIs.

In 2024, GREC organised two one-day workshops around the popular votes on pensions, co-organised a book launch with the Centre LIVES, and hosted four speakers from Switzerland and abroad.

Methods and Research Meetings

Together with the SSP Faculty at 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 2024 six presentations were held with speakers from Switzerland and abroad. The topics of the presentations were the following: human choices and the role of AI in collective decision-making, focusing on voting with large language models; insights into social desirability through comparisons of individuals' online survey responses and their streaming history data; the use of GPS tracking in panel studies in French-speaking Switzerland and France, highlighting challenges and opportunities; the ability of 8-year-olds to provide information about their family background and exploring alternative methods to collect such information; innovative approaches to addressing historical challenges and rethinking the future of history; and evaluating the quality of digital behavioural data and its implications for research. 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, allowing participants to benefit from their diverse scientific and disciplinary backgrounds. Occasionally, external researchers are invited to present their findings. In 2024, six lunch seminars were held, covering a wide range of topics. These included the impact of school enrolment cut-off dates on educational outcomes, the challenges of estimating the causal effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on mental health, and the transformation of power structures within the Swiss business elite from 1890 to 2020. Three seminars were dedicated to the topic of Artificial Intelligence, led by the Head of the INDEV unit at FORS, with sessions on the AI ecosystem, practical tools

for working with AI, and the legal and ethical framework of AI. Another seminar addressed clinical development using innovative trial designs and mixed methods. Additionally, one seminar explored the effects of local alien enfranchisement on perceptions of efficacy among citizens and non-citizens, presented by the winners of the 2023 FORS Data Re-use Award. The detailed programme can be viewed on the [seminar's dedicated webpage](#).

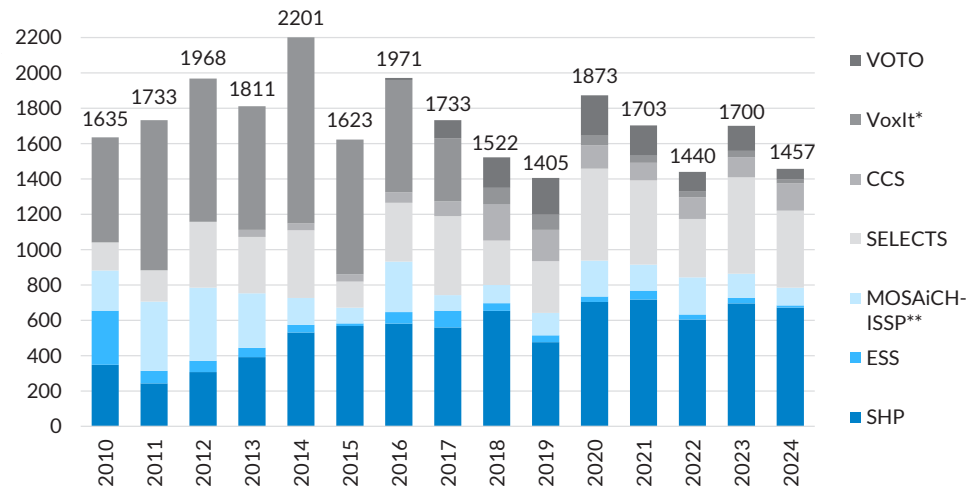
8.3 Outreach

FORS actively strengthens its outreach through a dynamic social media presence and targeted mailings, ensuring that our events, publications, and initiatives reach a broad and engaged audience. In addition to promoting research and fostering dialogue, we have also begun working on our rebranding with the help of an external communication agency. This effort aims to refine how we are perceived within the research community and develop a rebranding strategy. As part of this process, the agency conducted both quantitative and qualitative interviews with key actors in our community over the summer and led an internal workshop with the FORS Management and FORS collaborators across all units. The rebranding strategy, which includes recommendations on our visual identity, mission, values, and vision, will be finalised in early 2025. This is an ongoing process that will continue to evolve throughout 2025 and beyond.

8.4 Performance Indicators

FORS maintains a set of indicators that allow us to assess accomplishments and progress on different fronts. Below are various results for 2024:

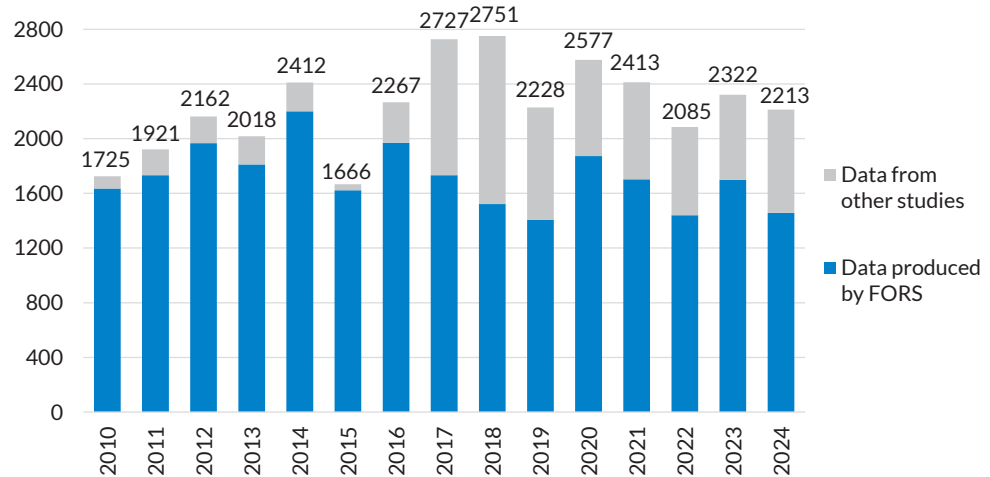
Number of datasets produced by FORS surveys that were distributed to researchers



* The reason for the decline in downloads of the Voxit dataset is probably the better availability of the individual Vox datasets on FORSbase.

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

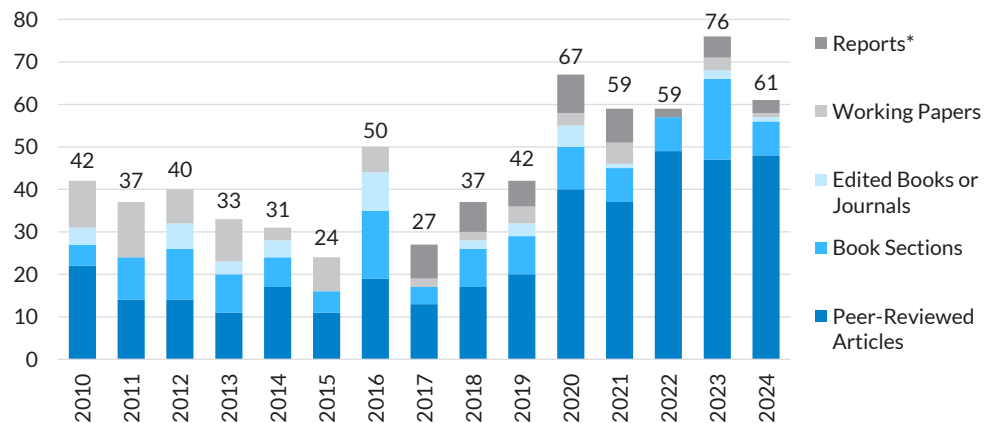


2 213 datasets in the social sciences were downloaded from SWISSUbase in 2024.

Number of new research project descriptions in the research project catalogue

The research project catalogue comprised around 12 400 descriptions in the social sciences, with 167 newly published entries by the end of 2024.

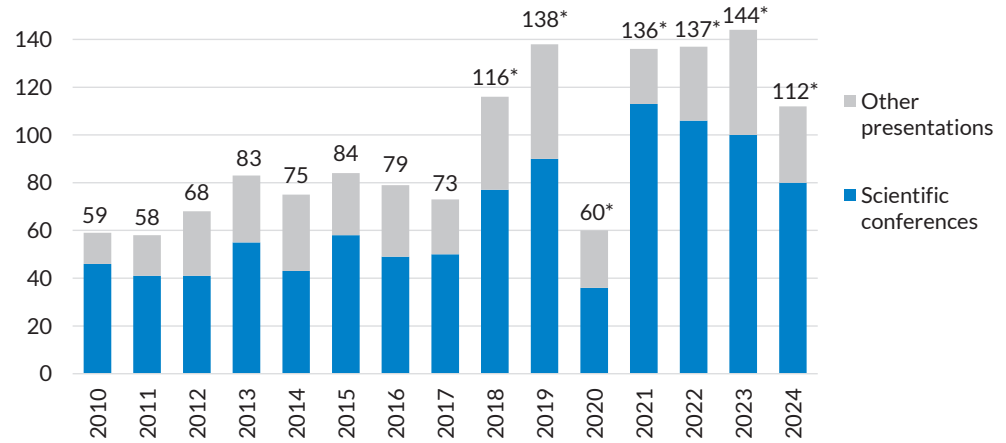
Publications by FORS staff



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

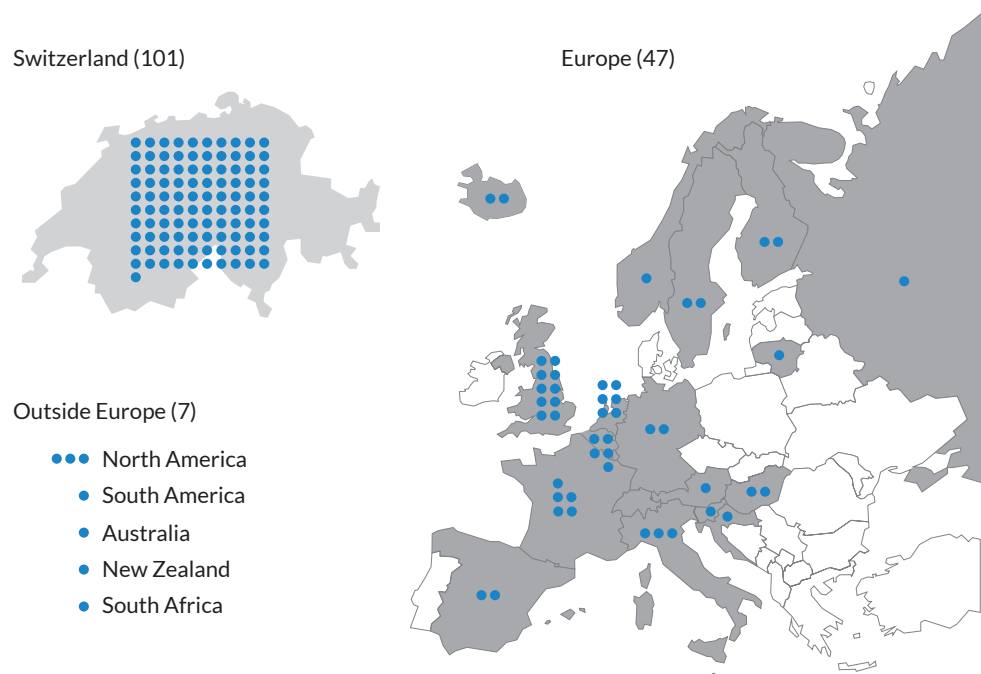
Presentations by FORS staff at conferences and scholarly meetings

There were 112 presentations of FORS staff and associated researchers at conferences and scholarly meetings in 2024, compared to 144 in 2023. See the complete list of 2024 publications and presentations by FORS staff on this [interactive webpage](#) (click on the year “2024” for full information).

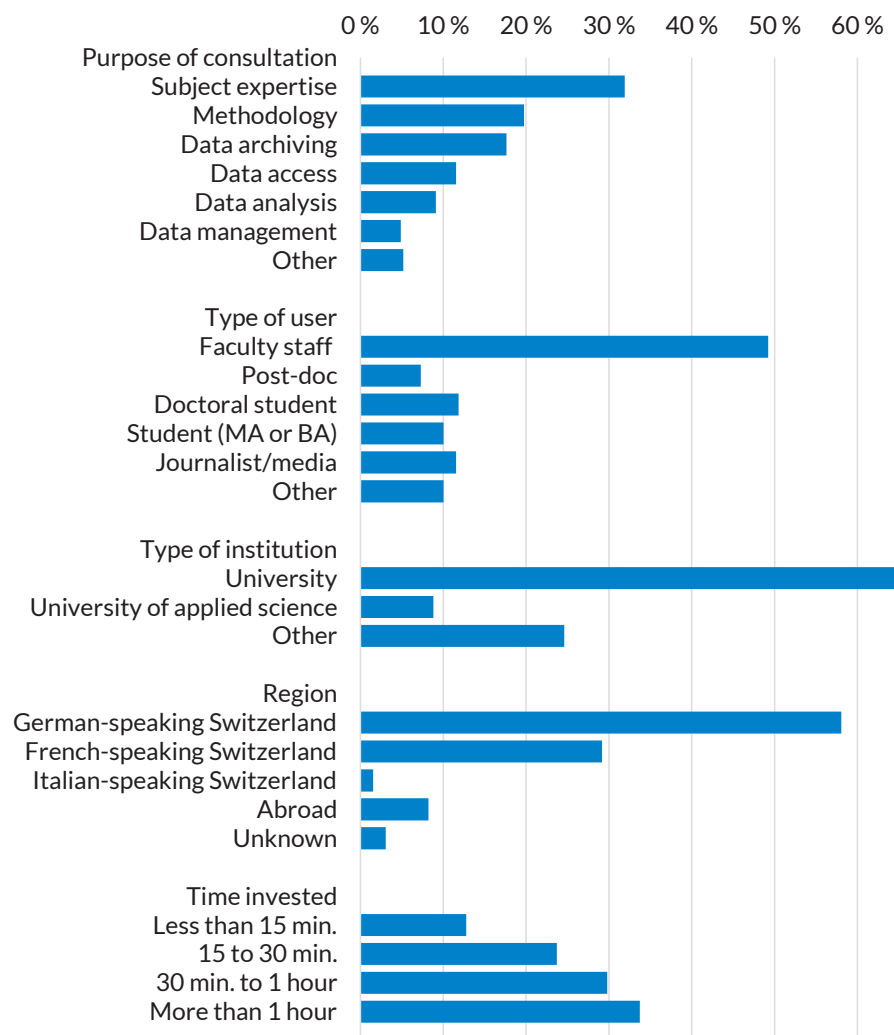


* From 2018 not only the collaborators, but also the associated researchers were asked to hand in their presentations.

Number of national and international collaborative research projects



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



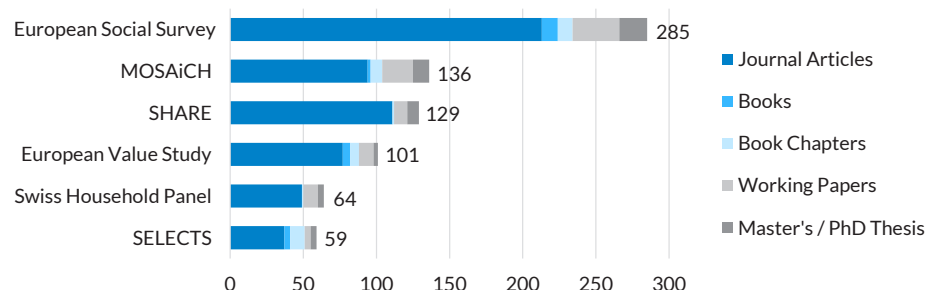
Developing and maintaining linkages and synergies between FORS staff and the outside research community is a key activity for FORS. This indicator addresses collaborative links with researchers in Switzerland and abroad.

In 2024, **32** FORS staff members were involved in **114** collaborative projects with outside organisations. Thus, around 75% of eligible FORS staff were involved in research activities. We can note a slight decrease compared to last year (120 collaborative projects). This is due to cyclical and circumstantial effects, but can mainly be attributed to the change of postdocs, who are in the process of building their research networks.

Three out of four (72%) of these collaborative projects were with individuals from the French-speaking part of Switzerland, 17% with colleagues from the German-speaking part of Switzerland and 35% with foreign institutions (some projects involved several institutions from different regions, thus 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). Our international collaborations are very diversified, including a broad range of foreign countries or regions (22).

Number of 2024 publications based on data produced by FORS



In 2024, there were at least 774 publications worldwide that used the Swiss data from surveys produced by FORS, including 285 for the ESS, 136 for MOSAiCH, and 129 for SHARE. Most of the publications (75%) were peer reviewed articles in academic journals. Eleven 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, seven FORS staff members taught in 2024. They gave 169 teaching hours in 6 different courses at all academic levels (bachelor, master, and PhD), as well as in the context of continuing education (see list in Appendix). The topics covered concerned predominantly data analysis and data management, but also survey methodology. The biggest part (71%) of the teaching hours were provided in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, with the exception of two courses given at the Swiss summer school 2024, in Lugano. There is a decrease compared to 2023 (331 hours of courses given by nine people) due to a reduced number (partly temporary) of FORS collaborators involved in teaching at UNIL. Thus, slightly less than a 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.

- » Lipps, Oliver and Ursina Kuhn. August 2024. "Introduction to Stata". online course given at the 28th Summer School in Social Science Methods 8-9 August 2024, Lugano.
- » Lipps, Oliver and Ursina Kuhn. August 2024. "Applied Panel Data Analysis". course given at the 28th Summer School in Social Science Methods 12-16 August 2024, Lugano.

- » Lutz, Georg. Spring semester 2024. «Elections et votations en Suisse: Analyse de données d'enquête». University of Lausanne, IEPI, bachelor level (with Lionel Marquis).
- » Rennwald, Line. Autumn semester 2024. « Atelier pratique de recherche: Inégalités sociales et vote ». University of Lausanne, IEP, Master level seminar (with Lionel Marquis).
- » Ryser, Valérie-Anne and Lebert, Florence. 4/6/2024. SHP workshop «Introduction to the Swiss Household Panel». FORS, Lausanne.
- » Wernli, Boris. Spring semester 2024. «Séminaire d'introduction aux méthodes quantitatives: Grandes enquêtes – analyses empiriques». University of Lausanne, faculty SSP, bachelor level.

9. FORS Governance

As an independent national organisation, FORS has various bodies in place that ensure its good governance: the Foundation Board, the Scientific Advisory Board and 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 UNIL and the SSP Faculty, a collaboration agreement around SWISSUbase, which is an independent simple association, and a collaboration agreement with DaSCH, our partner organisation from the humanities. Special mandates are also in place for three commissions for the national survey (Selects, MOSAiCH, Swiss Household Panel), that 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 SNSF and the SERI jointly financed most of the activities of FORS. Since 2021, the SNSF has taken over fully the federal part of funding for FORS's key activities, including data services. The funding was 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 met regularly to discuss practical aspects of the service level agreement and ensure coordination.

An important task in 2024 was the preparation of the SNSF funding application for the next funding period 2025–2028. FORS submitted its application in March 2024, based on a detailed activity plan for the 2025–2028 period. The SNSF had explicitly stated in the call that no funds could be requested for new activities. Consequently, FORS submitted an activity plan and budget that maintained the non-salary portion of the financial plan at the same level as the 2021–2024 funding period. For the salary portion, the plan retained the same number of positions (FTEs) and included only a request for adjustments to cover increased salary costs due to inflation and the mandatory annual salary increments, as required by the UNIL salary system that FORS follows.

While the review of the funding application was generally positive, the requested funds were not fully allocated. FORS was granted the same amount as it received during the 2021–2024 funding period, which left a funding gap given risen salaries and other costs. However, since FORS had started to budget conservatively in recent years and had unused funds left, no drastic savings measures needed to be taken at this stage.

Foundation Board [The Foundation Board](#), the governing body of FORS, is 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 2024, the Board approved the annual accounts and the audit report for 2023, and mandated the Scientific Advisory Board to evaluate the Survey unit. In November, the board approved the budget and annual planning for 2025.

Scientific Advisory Board [The Scientific Advisory Board](#) held an in-person meeting in March 2024, chaired by Prof. Mick Couper. The FORS Director gave an update on several important developments around FORS, mainly around research infrastructures such as MEDem and CNES. The Board then discussed the report on the fieldwork of the Selects 2023 Project, the plan to establish a European Question Bank with strong FORS involvement alongside the report from the SHP, Selects and MOSAiCH commission.

A joint meeting between the Foundation Board and the Scientific Advisory Board, which also took place in March 2024, was used to discuss the FORS funding application 2025–2028 that FORS needed to submit in March 2024 to the SNSF. Two ORD projects in which FORS was involved were also presented, the Data Stewardship project and the reCORD – recognising Open Research Data project. Both boards took note of the evaluation report from the INDEV unit.

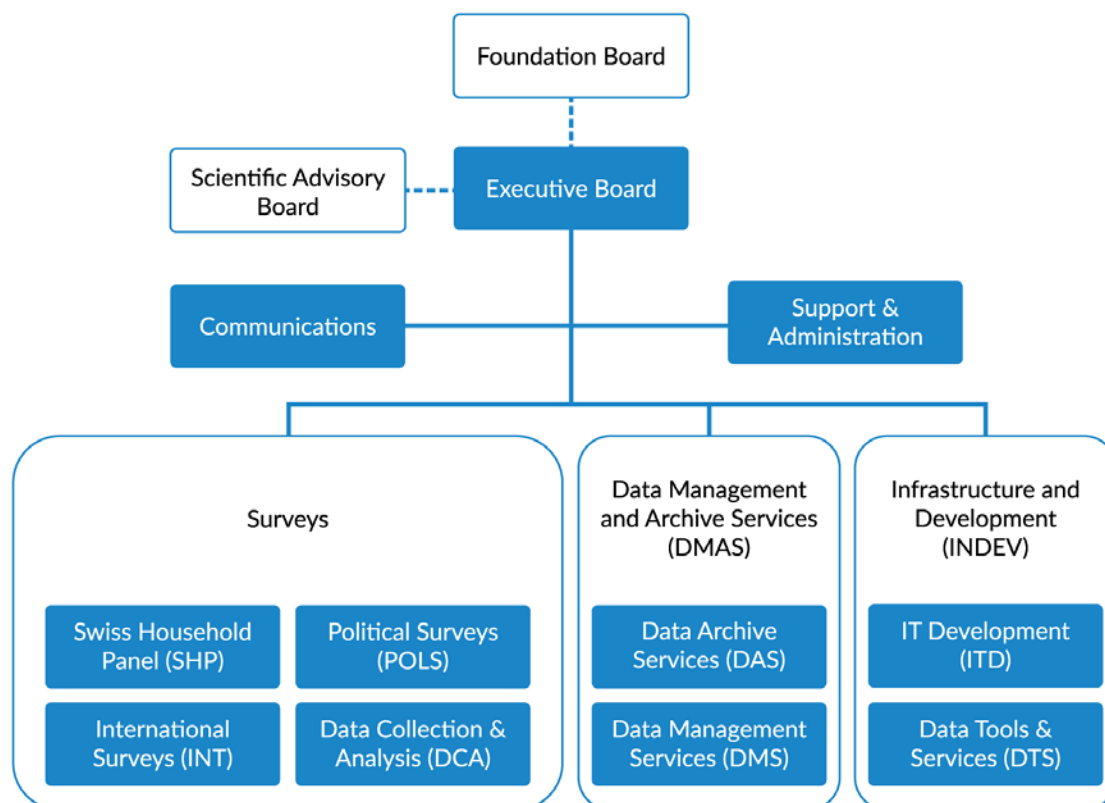
FORS Management The FORS Management, chaired by the FORS Director, comprises the heads of “Surveys”, “Data Management and Archive Services (DMAS)”, and the “Infrastructure and Development” (INDEV) units, as well as the head of Finance and Personnel. The Board typically meets twice a month, with the Communications Officer in attendance. Minutes of the meetings are recorded 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.

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 carry out these evaluations, the FORS Foundation Board mandates the Scientific Advisory Board, potentially including external experts, to conduct this evaluation. In 2024 the Survey unit was evaluated.

Within FORS, we also advanced with several key projects of strategic importance. FORS started to reflect on its branding strategy and mandated an external company to come up with a proposal on how to position the FORS brand and the many projects attached to FORS in the future. FORS also conducted an audit by an external data protection officer and a data security company. The conclusions drawn from these projects will be implemented in 2025.

Organisational Chart

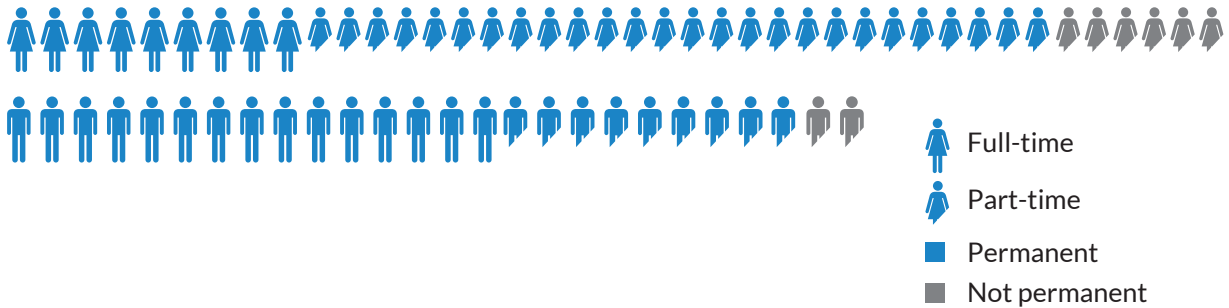


10. Staff statistics & finance

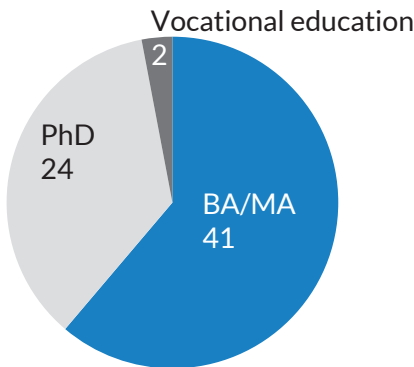
Staff

Status of employment

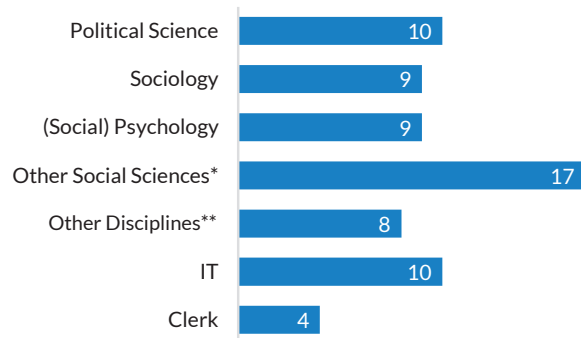
67 employees, 53.4 full-time equivalents



Degree of education



Disciplines



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

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

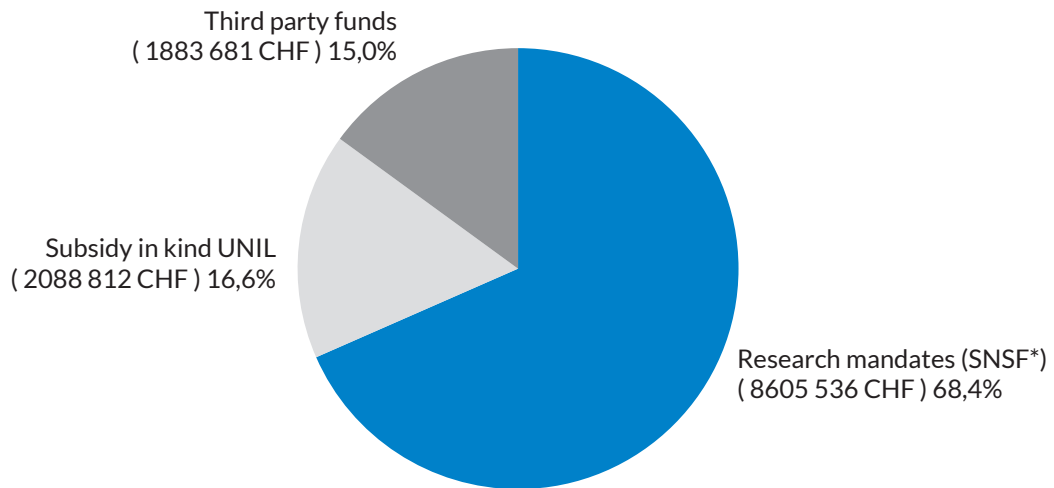
Nationalities and mother languages

- 52 Swiss
- 5 German
- 5 French
- 2 Finnish
- 2 Spanish
- 1 USA
- 1 Australian
- 1 Congolese
- 1 Dutch
- 1 Hungarian
- 1 Italian
- 1 Polish
- 1 Portuguese
- 1 Romanian
- 1 Serb

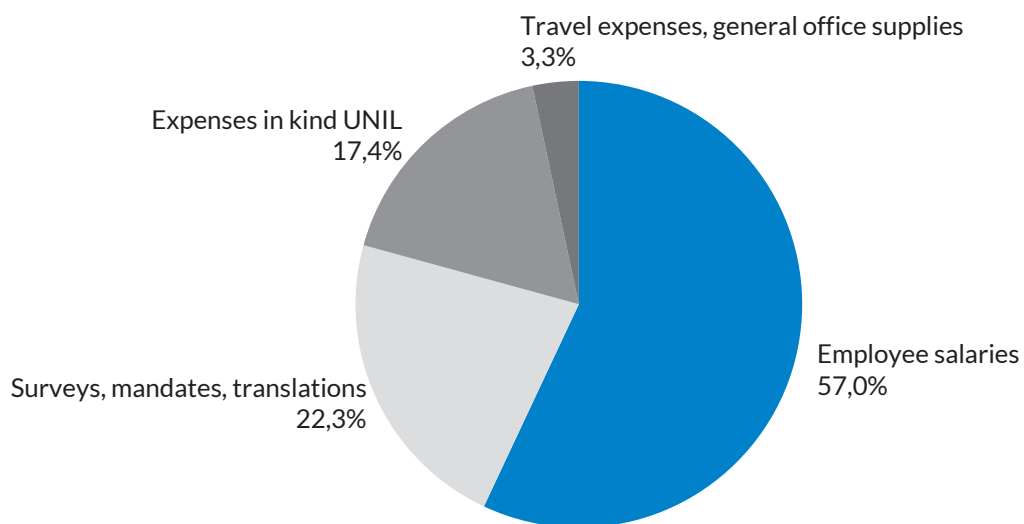


Finance

Income



Expenses



11. List of Abbreviations

| | |
|------------|--|
| AI | Artificial Intelligence |
| CATI | Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing |
| CAWI | Computer Assisted Web Interviewing |
| CCS | Comparative Candidate Survey |
| CESSDA | Consortium of European Social Science Data Archives |
| CNEF | Cross-National Equivalent File |
| CNES | Consortium of National Election Studies |
| DMAS | Data Management and Archiving Services (previously DARISS) |
| DAS | Data Archive Services |
| DaSCH | Data and Service Center for the Humanities |
| DCA | Data Collection and Analysis |
| DMS | Data Management Services |
| 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-CH | Social Science and Humanities Open Cloud Switzerland |
| 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

Production:
Open Concept AS, Norway
openconcept.no