

Veni, Vidi, Vici: Scientific Data Collection at Ipsos I&O

With Ipsos I&O, we regularly provide input on data collection approaches for scientific proposals. This typically involves grant applications for organisations such as the NWO (Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research). In this contribution, we outline the various ways Ipsos I&O can support researchers in data collection.

Each year, at Ipsos I&O, we conduct over 50 data collection projects for universities. These projects demand quality—a high, well-composed response rate and high-quality data. Below, we outline the various ways Ipsos I&O can assist scientists in gathering data for their projects.

How Can Ipsos I&O Help?

Research at universities is partly subsidised through secondary or tertiary funding streams. Examples include NWO grants (such as Open Competition, or Veni, Vidi, Vici) and ERC grants (Starting, Consolidator, Advanced Grants). Researchers submit a proposal—within a specific programme or theme—and compete with other proposals for grants. Ipsos I&O can help in roughly two ways:

1. We provide input for a proposal written by the applicant. This includes the approach to data collection (feasibility and justification) and budgeting. In recent years, several applications for which we provided input have been granted. Sometimes we co-wrote the proposal.
2. We collect data for awarded projects. Researchers know how to find Ipsos I&O for data collection for their projects. A simple email or phone call is sufficient for an informal discussion on how best to operationalise the intended data collection within the proposal's framework.

In plain terms, Ipsos I&O can contribute 'at the front end' (in developing a setup and/or writing a grant proposal) or 'at the back end' (we advise on data collection and ensure execution). Both are, of course, also possible.

What Can Ipsos I&O Do?

You may have guessed it: we can do a lot. Below are some possibilities. The list is not exhaustive but provides a good overview of what is possible.

I&O Research Panel

Currently, with over 47,000 panel members, the I&O Research Panel is a valuable source for scientific data collection. We actively recruit our panel members, mostly offline, through random address- or person-based sampling to ensure a well-constituted panel. From the panel, we draw representative samples or select (sometimes hard-to-reach) target groups. Importantly, panel members cannot sign up themselves; they must be invited by us to become members. This not only prevents the presence of 'professional respondents' but also curbs fraudulent attempts or bots. Recent research has shown that there are no indications of bots in our panel. Renowned scientific institutes, such as SCP, WODC, WRR, UvA, VU, UU, UT, or RUL, already use the I&O Research Panel for scientific data collection.

We use the I&O Research Panel for both cross-sectional and longitudinal research. By managing expectations, maintaining the panel, and applying smart incentive strategies, we achieve high response and retention rates.

Youth Research

With the I&O Research Panel, we also invite children and young adults to participate in research. The panel itself contains nearly 4,000 panel members aged 16 to 25, and through parents (with their consent), we can currently invite over 2,000 12 to 15-year-olds to participate.

I&O Entrepreneurs Panel

The business equivalent of the I&O Research Panel. The I&O Entrepreneurs Panel currently includes about 6,500 entrepreneurs whom we can approach for participation in research. With the panel, it is possible to conduct representative sample research among business establishments by sector and size class. We actively recruit panel members for the I&O Entrepreneurs Panel.

Fresh Sample Research

If our panels do not provide sufficient assistance, we can also work with so-called 'fresh' samples. Ipsos I&O can draw (address) samples from sources such as the Basic Register of Addresses and Buildings (BAG) or the National Information System of Workplaces (LISA). We approach citizens, consumers, or entrepreneurs by letter for participation in (online) research (push-to-web), possibly combined with other data collection methods, such as written, telephone, or face-to-face research.

International Data Collection

Ipsos boasts its own online access panels in over 50 countries, with more than 5 million panel members. In this way, we facilitate internationally comparative research. If necessary (in terms of countries and/or sample size), we will collaborate with a fixed network of ISO-certified panel providers. Clients can take care of translation work themselves or entrust it to us.

Classical and Innovative Data Collection Methods

At Ipsos I&O, we have almost all data collection methods in-house; online, written, telephone, and face-to-face methods. This means our dependence on external parties is minimized, resulting in shorter lines, easier adjustments (more flexibility), less risk, etc. We have our own call centre and access to our 'pool' of face-to-face interviewers. Besides these more classical methods of data collection, we have gained experience in recent years with more innovative methods, such as:

- Data donation;
- Apps;
- Diary research;
- Movement tracking;
- Synthetic data.

Inclusive Data Collection

Through conducting numerous data collection projects, we have built much experience and expertise in reaching hard-to-reach target groups. How and where can we best reach them, with what message, and in what form? In our research, for example, we involve practically trained individuals, functional illiterates, low-income individuals, people with a migration background, business target groups, young people, and older people.

Interested in consulting on the possibilities for your grant application? Looking for a collaborative partner? Or a specific question about a sample? Let us know. An email or phone call to Robbert Zandvliet, our expert in scientific data collection, is enough for a no-obligation consultation.