What kinds of regional SOEP data are available?

Level	number of regions	with SOEP cases in 2016	mean number of households in 2016	mean number of persons in 2016	Available since	Data Access	Data Protection
States *(Bundesländer)*	16	16	1,031	1,747	1984	Standard SOEP dataset (scientific use file)	Data distribution contract
Municipal size classes (e. g., Boustedt)					1984	Standard SOEP dataset with special password	Expanded data distribution contract covering the use of municipal size classes and data protection concept
Spatial planning regions (geocodes) *(Raumordnungsregionen)*	96	96	172	291	1985	Standard SOEP dataset plus SOEP geocodes	Expanded data distribution contract covering the use of municipal size classes and expanded data protection concept
Official county codes (KKZ) *Landkreise, kreisfreie Städte*	402	402	41	70	1985	SOEPremote (online access to county level regional data) or at the SOEP Research Date Center at DIW Berlin	Expanded data distribution contract covering the use of SOEPremote and SOEP remote access form
Official municipality key *(Gemeinden),*	11,190	3,167	5	9	2000	Use of data only at the SOEP Research Data Center at DIW Berlin	Only by personal arrangement in the framework of our "SOEP in Residence" program
postal codes, *(Postleitzahlen),* Microm neighborhood data	8,208	4,432	4	6	1993 2000		
Geo-coordinates at street block level					2006	Use of data only at the SOEP Research Data Center at DIW Berlin	Only by personal arrangement in the framework of our "SOEP in Residence" program

German regional definitions from December 31, 2014; SOEPv33.1.

Using regional SOEP data for spatial analysis

SOEP offers diverse possibilities for regional and spatial analysis. With the anonymized regional information on the residences of SOEP respondents (households and individuals), it is possible to link numerous regional indicators on the levels of the states (*Bundesländer*), spatial planning regions, districts, and postal codes with the SOEP data. However, specific security regulations under German data protection law must be observed due to the sensitivity of the data (see overview). Accordingly, researchers are not allowed to include sensitive information in their publications, such as respondents' place of residence or administrative district. However, this information can be used as valuable background for analyses.

What kinds of regional SOEP data can be considered representative?

With its relatively small sample size compared to the German Microcensus, the SOEP is not suitable for small-scale regional analyses. SOEP samples were drawn in a stratified manner by state *(Bundesland)* and district size class *(Gemeindegrößenklassen)*, but regional analyses can only be conducted on the highest-population states. The danger in more detailed regional analyses is that the case numbers would be too small to obtain statistically significant statements.

The very detailed regional keys contained in the SOEP can be used, however, in two important ways:
1. To incorporate external information describing the spatial context (for example, the percentage of people in the neighborhood with a migration background or the unemployment rate in the municipality or district).
2. To form similar groups of regions (such as shrinking municipalities or functional areas, grouped, for example, by their economic dynamics).

Further information

The following articles provide an overview of the diverse possibilities for regional analyses with the SOEP data:
http://www.diw.de/de/diw_02.c.222519.de/regionaldaten.html

Jan Goebel: Regionalisierungsmöglichkeiten des SOEP. In: Regionale Standards, Ausgabe 2013.

Gundi Knies and C. Katharina Spieß: Data Documentation 17: Regional Data in the German Socio-Economic Panel Study (SOEP).

Jan Goebel, C. Katharina Spieß, Nils R. J. Witte and Susanne Gerstenberg: Data Documentation 26: Die Verknüpfung des SOEP mit MICROM-Indikatoren: Der MICROM-SOEP Datensatz.

Peter Hintze, Tobia Lakes: Data Documentaion 46: Geographically Referenced Data in Social Science: A Service Paper for SOEP Data Users.

Jan Goebel: Job submission instructions for the SOEPremote System at DIW Berlin. SOEP Survey Paper 155.

How to obtain the regional SOEP data

If you need more detailed regional information for your research, such as the detailed municipal size classes, you will need an expanded data distribution contract, addressing the data protection regulations for these sensitive data in your own data protection concept.

To use the spatial planning regions (ROR) you will need both an expanded data distribution contract and an expanded data protection concept. After signing your contract, you will receive the data online free of charge.

Either on a research stay at DIW Berlin or through the use of our SOEPremote access system, you can conduct analyses on the level of small-scale official district codes (KKZ), which are considered highly sensitive data under data protection regulations.

The precondition for using SOEPremote is, again, an expanded data distribution contract and an addendum to your contract covering the use of SOEPremote, which can be obtained by submitting an application. After activation of access, you can transfer your analysis syntax (only in STATA format) through SOEPremote by e-mail to our server. This processes the task automatically—after verifying data protection requirements—and sends you the results by email in a log file.

Smaller-scale regional data at the level of postal codes, official municipality keys, and street-block geo-coordinates can only be used on site at DIW Berlin in order to prevent misuse.

If you have any questions or are interested in using the SOEP regional data, please contact us at:

soepmail@diw.de

Please find our forms here:

Data protection concept

To apply to use the municipality size classes, you must submit a data protection concept!

In it, the following points should be taken into account:
- Who will be working with the data?
- Procedures for changing passwords on a regular basis
- Description of location/ type of computer where the data will be stored
- Procedure to prevent use of the data on other computers (such as home computers)

This must be signed by the data protection officer of your institution.

For the use of spatial planning regions (geocodes) you must also take the following points into account:
- isolated computer (not linked to a network)
- at least two-stage access control for files
- authorized user must be able to determine whether unauthorized access by others has occurred or been attempted (through a protocol)
- procedure to prevent use of the data on other computers (also not on a home computer)
- limitation of access to central IT facilities
- regular checks by data protection officer

This data protection concept must be signed by the data protection officer of your institution.

You are welcome to send us a draft of your data protection concept by email at:

soepmail@diw.de

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Regional Analyses with

SOEP

- **States (Bundesländer)**
- **Municipal size classes**
- **Spatial planning regions**
- **Official county codes**
- **Official municipality keys**
- **Geo-coordinates**