

Video Interviewing at ESS10 - Guidelines for National Coordinators

For Round 10 of ESS, video interviews can be conducted in cases where target respondents are unable or don't wish to be interviewed in-person. This has been introduced due to concerns over the willingness of some groups to take part in a face-to-face survey in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This document includes guidelines for NCs that choose to allow video interviews in their country. All NCs proposing to allow video interviews in their country are required to complete a short questionnaire on their planned approach (the questionnaire is saved in the NC Intranet section of myESS alongside these guidelines). This needs to be completed and sent to your Country Contact (CC) at least two weeks before your pre-test start date. In advance of this, please confirm to your CC whether you plan to allow video interviews as soon as this is known.

Please refer to the points below regarding arrangements that must be made for video interviews.

Whether to allow video interviews

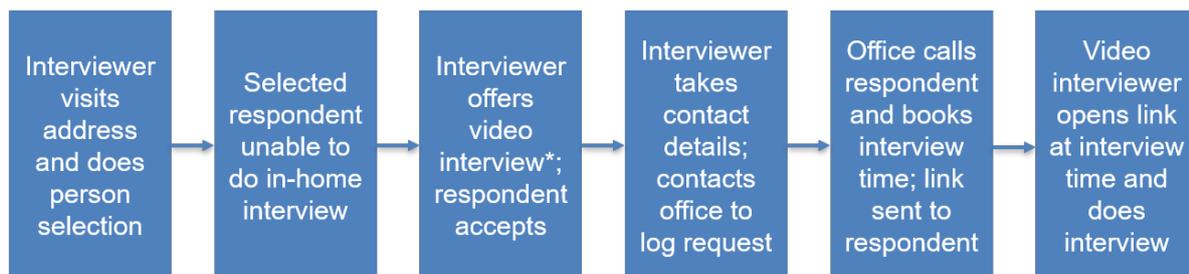
Each NC team should make a decision on whether to allow video interviews in their country. There is no requirement to allow video interviews; if it is felt this is not appropriate or will not be helpful in delivering fieldwork, this option should not be included.

If a country chooses not to allow video interviews, they cannot offer telephone interviews instead (telephone interviews are not permitted in any cases).

How to manage video interviews

The Fieldwork Team recommends establishing a small specialist team of interviewers to conduct video interviews, rather than allowing all interviewers to do this. Figure 1 gives an example process flow from first face-to-face contact to conducting the video interview under this approach. However, it will be up to each country to determine the approach that works best for them.

Figure 1: Example process flow for video interviews where centralised team used



* Interviewer would need to be incentivised

Where countries would prefer to allow all of their interviewers to conduct video interviews, such an approach is allowed. However, NCs will need to provide information on how they will monitor interviewers to ensure they are carrying out video interviews as specified (for example, still prioritising in-person interviews where possible, and always using two screens to conduct interviews).

Regardless of the approach taken, it is strongly recommended that reminder calls are scheduled with respondents in advance of any video interviews arranged. This should help minimise the risk of 'drop-outs' on the day of interviews. We also recommend that basic

instructions for joining the video interview (based on the platform used) are shared with respondents in advance of interviews, to minimise the risk of any technical issues.

For both approaches, the usual maximum of 48 sample units per interviewer still applies. This is an overall maximum, across in-person and video interviews combined, and not a maximum per mode. Countries using a small centralised team should particularly consider how they can minimise the number of interviews done by an individual interviewer. We recommend assessing the demand for video interviews in the early part of fieldwork and increasing the size of the video interviewing team where needed to ensure interviews are spread across a reasonable number of interviewers. Cases should also be allocated to video interviewers 'randomly' rather than at a PSU level to minimise the possible impact of interviewer effects.

Making contact with sample units

There should be no change to how interviewers make contact with sample units. For most countries, this will always be done face-to-face. For countries using address or dwelling based samples, the person selection should always take place face-to-face.

Where countries are allowed to make initial contact by telephone, the interviewer can offer the video option if a respondent is reluctant to take part in a face-to-face interview at this stage.

When to introduce the option of video interviews

Interviewers can introduce the option of a video interview if there is any reluctance from target respondents to take part in an in-person interview. Interviewers do not need to wait for a final refusal before offering a video interview.

The video option can be mentioned in the advance letter while making clear that we would prefer to interview people in-person where possible. If the video option is mentioned in the letter, a contact number can be included for respondents to arrange a time for the interview.

The respondent information brochure has also been slightly revised to reflect the use of video interviewing. All countries using video interviewing should make sure they use the version of the leaflet that includes this wording.

If a video interview is arranged and is not carried out (e.g. due to the respondent not joining the interview) further contact should be attempted with the respondent by phone and/or face-to-face in line with the usual ESS contact requirements.

How to incentivise interviewers

It will be important that incentives are offered to face-to-face interviewers in cases where video interviews are passed to a central team. It will be up to each country to determine the appropriate incentive level. However, the incentive should be sufficient to motivate interviewers to introduce the video option rather than accepting a refusal, but not so high that it disincentivises the interviewer conducting the interview face-to-face.

Platforms to allow and data protection

To minimise the variation in platforms used, video interviews can only be conducted using Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or Skype for Business. Countries can use just one of these platforms or offer respondents a choice of these platforms. If NCs feel that none of these platforms are appropriate in their country, an alternative platform may be considered. However, in this case, more detailed information on how this platform meets GDPR requirements will need to be provided in the Data Processing Agreement (DPA) with ESS ERIC.

NCs need to include information on their proposed approach to conducting video interviews in Annexes 1 and 2 of the DPA. This needs to include the platform(s) being used, information on how the platform(s) will be used, and how the security of the platform will be guaranteed. Fieldwork cannot start until a DPA is in place.

NCs should also have agreements in place with their data collection organisations on the platform(s) that will be used, including confirmation that they use a licensed version of the platform(s). Respondents should not be required to sign up for/set up an account or install any new software before taking part in a video interview.

A revised version of the advance letter has been provided for countries offering video interviews. As noted above, the respondent information brochure is being slightly revised to reflect the use of video interviewing. All countries using video interviewing should make sure they use the version of the leaflet that includes this wording.

Recording interviews

Video interviews must never be recorded. NCs should have an explicit agreement with their data collection organisation that interviews are never recorded.

Devices to allow – interviewer

Interviewers should have two devices or two screens – one for the video call and to screen-share showcards and the other to ask the questions/record responses in the CAPI program. If any NCs feel it is more effective for interviewers to conduct interviews with one device (using separate windows for the video call and CAPI program), this should be raised with your Country Contact, alongside any evidence you have showing the feasibility/effectiveness of this approach.

Devices to allow – respondent

Respondents will be able to use any internet-enabled device for the interview, including a smartphone. However, where available, it is recommended that a larger screen (desktop/laptop/tablet) is used for clearer display of the video and showcards.

Showcards

It is recommended that the showcards are displayed by interviewers in PDF and full screen mode. This will allow the interviewer to easily move between cards using the ‘page down’ function. ESS HQ will advise on any further adaptation needed to the showcards for video interviewing.

We recommend providing interviewers with spare copies of the showcards. This will allow a hard copy showcard pack to be shared with respondents in cases where there are issues with viewing the showcards on screen (e.g. where a smartphone is being used for this interview).

Additional information to collect in the Contact Form

The Contact Forms (CFs) have been updated to collect further information on contact modes, appointments and refusals in light of the pandemic and inclusion of video interviews. NC teams need to either use one of the official CF versions or ensure this information is collected in the CF they use (please refer to the Data Protocol for the information that is required).

Additional questions in the ESS10 questionnaire

Questions on the interview method, device used by respondents, experience of technical issues, and the overall interview experience have been added to the source questionnaire, to provide more information on the experience of video interviews.

Pre-testing

All countries that plan to allow video interviewing should conduct around 10 video interviews as part of their pre-test (in addition to the usual 30 face-to-face interviews). Pre-testing needs to include a full test of the process of arranging and conducting video interviews using the same approach as planned for main ESS fieldwork.

We acknowledge that it will be difficult to control the number of video interviews that are conducted in the pre-test based on the main stage approach, where this option is only offered after a refusal to the face-to-face interview. Therefore, for the pre-test only, it will be acceptable to offer video interviews to a sub-set of sample units straightway, rather than after offering a face-to-face interview.

We note that the larger pre-test sample size may increase costs a little but hope that the funds can be met locally. Where this is not possible, the NC should discuss with their CC if savings can be found by making cuts elsewhere to support this essential additional pre-testing.

Interviewer briefings

Interviewers must be briefed on video interviewing as part of the R10 briefings. The nature of this briefing will depend on the approach being used in each country. For example, if the central team approach is being used, face-to-face interviewers will only need to be briefed on the process of introducing the video interview option and collecting/passing on contact details (with a separate briefing arranged for the small team of interviewers conducting the video interviews). ESS HQ will provide some outline briefing material on video interviewing, to be adapted to the approach used by each country.

Back-checks

Video interviews need to be back-checked using the same procedure as outlined for face-to-face interviews in the R10 specification.

Inclusion of video interviews in the R10 data file

Subject to the usual quality checks, we propose to include any video interviews in the integrated data file along with face-to-face interviews. The data file will include a variable showing the interview mode (this is question V1 in the ESS10 Source Questionnaire).