Cohesion in further developing and innovating SHARE across all 28 member countries

Reporting

Project Information

SHARE-COHESION
Grant agreement ID: 870628

Funded under
H2020-EU.1.4.
H2020-EU.1.4.1.1.

DOI
10.3030/870628

Overall budget
€ 4 963 433,75

EU contribution
€ 4 963 432,50

Start date
1 October 2019

End date
30 September 2023

Coordinated by
EUROPEAN RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE CONSORTIUM FOR THE SURVEY OF HEALTH, AGEING AND RETIREMENT IN EUROPE

Germany

Periodic Reporting for period 1 - SHARE-COHESION
(Cohesion in further developing and innovating SHARE across all 28 member countries)

Reporting period: 2019-10-01 to 2021-03-31

Summary of the context and overall objectives of the project
The Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE), is a research infrastructure for studying the effects of health, social, economic and environmental policies over the life-course. The key value of SHARE lies in its strict cross-national comparability which permits unbiased cross-national comparisons of living conditions of the European population aged 50 and over in all EU countries, Switzerland and Israel. The main objective of SHARE is to provide excellent data for researchers worldwide through a combination of (a) European coverage, (b) transdisciplinarity and (c) population-representative panel design with strict cross-national comparability through ex-ante harmonisation.

The Achilles heel of SHARE, very much like the European Union itself, lies in the centrifugal forces of the member states with their different policies, priorities and abilities to pay. These centrifugal forces have increased with the number of countries and endanger the cohesion of SHARE as a pan-European infrastructure, especially our ability to harmonise the scientific content and the survey methods across SHARE’s member countries. SHARE’s strategy to counter these centrifugal forces has been, from its very beginning, to establish a strong central coordination, which is financially independent.

The overarching aim of this project is therefore to strengthen the centralised approach of SHARE in order to combine scientific excellence with cohesion across all 28 SHARE member countries. To reach this aim, several objectives are set in SHARE Waves 8, 9, and 10:

- Supporting the supranational innovation and development tasks to be executed by the Area Coordinators (scientific content)
- Supporting the survey designers (fieldwork methods and electronic tools)
- Funding training as it is instrumental for internal cohesion, especially in the scientifically less developed Member States and their participating SMEs
- Due to COVID-19, adaptation and revision of scientific content, electronic tools, interview mode, and training procedures, plus implementation of the first SHARE Corona Survey including data release

Work performed from the beginning of the project to the end of the period covered by the report and main results achieved so far

During the first reporting period, the project performed a combination of innovation and development tasks such as:

- An extension of the cognitive function module in SHARE by adding further tests in close coordination with the US Health and Retirement Study.
- A time expenditure module measuring how much time people over 50 years old spend on different activities while keeping track of changes in their time expenditure after retirement, after changes in their living situation or after a health shock.
- The collection of physical activity data using accelerometry.
- A saving regret module, asking panel members of 65 and older whether they regret the savings paths they took earlier in life and which saving choices they would have preferred in hindsight.
- A panel version of the social network module, which tracks changes in respondents’ interpersonal milieu over time.
- Preparing the laboratory results from the dried blood spot samples (DBSS), which were collected in
Wave 6.
• Survey methodological innovations include a retention stimulation programme, improvement of sampling frames, a better targeting of respondents in institutions, and more efficient fieldwork monitoring.
• Further development of the electronic tools which have made SHARE famous:
  o Development of an adaptive testing tool and improve the data and documentation tool
  o Completely revamped software infrastructure
  o Compatibility with current software and hardware environments
• Furthermore, in reaction to COVID-19: adaptation and revision of scientific content, electronic tools, interview mode, and training procedures, plus implementation of the first SHARE Corona Survey including first data release

Progress beyond the state of the art and expected potential impact (including the socio-economic impact and the wider societal implications of the project so far)

The SHARE-COHESION project is an important element of the overall SHARE project. Its main impact is the impact of SHARE itself, which provides an infrastructure of data permitting researchers to help matching the challenges of population ageing, both in terms of empirical research and evidence-based policy decisions. By the end of 2020, the number of users had surpassed 12,000 scientists worldwide. SHARE has been used widely by the EU Commission and Member States’ governments in designing and evaluating health care, long-term care, pension and labour market policies.

Since SHARE Wave 7, full coverage of all Continental EU Member States has been attained. The current challenge is to maintain this EU coverage in spite of the current political trends of re-nationalization and disregard for scientific evidence. The main sustainability challenge for SHARE is to align SHARE’s five operational pillars (i.e. (1) national survey, (2) routine tasks, (3) international coordination, (4) innovation and development of content and methods, (5) harmonisation with other surveys) with the available funding sources. A particular challenge is to find a manageable balance between centralised and decentralised funding.