



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
EUROSTAT

Directorate A – Resources  
A.5 – Methodology; Innovation in official statistics

## HOW TO APPLY FOR MICRODATA?

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### What are microdata?

Microdata are the units of data that aggregate statistics are compiled from. Microdata consist of sets of records containing information on individual respondents or business entities. To protect the anonymity of respondents (persons, organisations), the access to microdata is restricted.

### Access to microdata

We grant access to our microdata **for scientific purposes only**.

To apply for access to Eurostat's microdata, your organisation must first be recognised by us as a research entity – a university, research institution or research department in public administration, bank, statistical institute etc.

### Applying for access

1. **Step 1 – Apply to have your research organisation recognised as a research entity.** You only need to do this once, no matter how many access requests you make subsequently (the procedure takes around 4 weeks).
2. **Step 2 – Apply for access to microdata.** Once we have recognised your organisation as a research entity, you can apply for access by submitting a research proposal (the procedure takes around 8 weeks).

### How are the data provided?

Once we have approved your research proposal, depending on the access type(s) of your choice, we will:

- send your principal researcher files containing partially anonymised data (scientific-use files) and/or
- authorise your organisation to access non-anonymised data (secure-use files) in Eurostat's "Safe centre" in Luxembourg.

Access to microdata is only valid for the period specified in the research proposal. At the end of that period, you must:

- destroy any original scientific-use files sent by Eurostat and any confidential data derived from the files, and
- send Eurostat your research results.

## 2. APPLYING FOR RECOGNITION AS A RESEARCH ENTITY

### Eligibility

Eurostat grants access to microdata only to recognised research entities. To qualify for recognition, an organisation must:

- have research as one of its main activities (e.g. universities, research institutions) or be a research department within other organisation (e.g. within bank, statistical institute, etc.);
- provide evidence of publication of research results;
- be independent and autonomous in formulating scientific conclusions;
- have adequate data security safeguards.

## Responsibilities

Before being recognized as a research entity, an organisation must fill in the [application form](#) and sign a [confidentiality undertaking with the terms of use](#). Note that there is a separate model of confidentiality undertaking [for entities located in the countries not covered](#) by General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)<sup>1</sup> and [for international organisations](#).

The confidentiality undertaking commits the signatory and all researchers having access to confidential data to:

- accessing confidential data only for the agreed purposes and
- guaranteeing the physical security of the data, including prevention and taking action in case of violation of confidentiality.

**To apply for research entity recognition, please complete the [application form](#) and send it to [ESTAT-ENTITIES-ASSESSMENT@ec.europa.eu](mailto:ESTAT-ENTITIES-ASSESSMENT@ec.europa.eu).**

### 3. REQUESTING ACCESS TO MICRODATA (SUBMITTING A RESEARCH PROPOSAL)

Once your organisation has been recognised as a research entity, its name will be included in [the list of recognised entities](#) on the Eurostat website. You can then request access to microdata by submitting one or more research proposals.

The researchers named in the proposal should be:

- an employee of the research entity (or be working for them as a contractor, only in justified cases) or

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<sup>1</sup> The standard model of confidentiality undertaking is for entities located in the EU, EEA (European Economic Area: EU countries plus Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway) and for entities located in the countries covered by the Commission decisions on the adequacy of the protection of personal data. The countries recognized by the Commission as providing adequate protection of personal data are: Andorra, Argentina, Canada (commercial organizations), Switzerland, Faeroe Islands, Guernsey, State of Israel, Isle of Man, Japan, Jersey, New Zealand, Eastern Republic of Uruguay and United Kingdom (see more: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/law-topic/data-protection/international-dimension-data-protection/adequacy-decisions\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/law-topic/data-protection/international-dimension-data-protection/adequacy-decisions_en)).

- senior (Ph.D.) students under guidance of a supervisor employed by the research entity; supervisor must be identified in the research proposal as a principal researcher and a senior student as an individual researcher;

The link between the researcher and the research entity must allow the research entity to impose disciplinary sanctions on the researcher in the event of negligent or deliberate misuse of data.



Most microdata sets released by Eurostat **are partially anonymised**. In addition to removing direct identifiers from the records, some variables are further anonymised, i.e. grouped together, aggregated etc. This sometimes limits the usage of microdata. The individual microdata set pages on Eurostat website (menu on the left) provide for this crucial information about data preparation. Please consider it while drafting the research project description.

### Check before you apply for microdata

Before you apply for microdata please check if you fulfil all pre-conditions.

Your entity is mentioned on the <a href="#">list of recognized research entities</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have the research entity number and the name of the contact person in your research entity at hand (you may contact <a href="mailto:Estat-microdata-access@ec.europa.eu">Estat-microdata-access@ec.europa.eu</a> if you can not find this information otherwise)	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have checked that all researchers who will have access to the data are employed by or linked to your research entity	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have read the description of the partial anonymisation methods applied on microdata (scientific use files). See: left side menu on <a href="#">Eurostat microdata access website</a> (or links below).	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>You have EU-login allowing 2-factor authentication</b> to submit research proposal via <a href="#">Microdata Access Workflow Tool system</a> . If you don't have the EU login, create it here: <a href="https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/cas/login">https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/cas/login</a> ). All new EU logins must be validated, please read the instructions at the Workflow Tool homepage.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have read the <a href="#">Quick User Guide to Microdata Access Workflow Tool</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### 4. JOINT PROJECTS – NETWORK OF RESEARCH ENTITIES

Two or more research entities may submit a joint research project. However each partner organisation must be recognized as a research entity in its own right, and sign a confidentiality undertaking.

The joint research proposal must be signed by the principal researcher of just one of the partners (the co-ordinating partner).

**When you are ready to submit a research proposal, please complete the on-line form via [Microdata Access Workflow Tool](#) (accessible with EU-login).**

You may need the [application form in Word](#) for your internal purposes. Note that the submission of research proposals is solely via Microdata Access Workflow Tool.

## **5. VALIDATION OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

Before approving research proposals, we will consult data responsible departments in Eurostat and national statistical authorities (NSAs). The standard NSA consultation period is 4 weeks.

You can follow the status of the application you have initiated via [Microdata Access Workflow Tool](#). For more information, consult [User Guide to Microdata Access Workflow Tool](#).

## **6. GRANTING ACCESS TO MICRODATA**

Once we have approved your research proposal, depending on the access type(s) of your choice, we will:

- grant you access to partially anonymised data (scientific-use files) stored on secure S-CIRCABC platform (see [Instructions for data download](#))
- authorise you to access non-anonymised data (secure-use files) in Eurostat's "Safe centre" in Luxembourg.

## **7. CHANGES TO RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

Once a research proposal has been accepted, new researchers can be added (provided they sign a confidentiality declaration), and the duration of the project can be extended.

- [Form to ask for staff changes](#)
- [Form to ask for project extension](#)

The adding of a new partner organisations or a new data sets always requires a consultation with the national statistical authorities.

- [Form to add partner organisation](#)
- [Form to add a dataset](#)

Use the [General form for changes](#) if you would like to make other changes, not covered by the dedicated forms.

## 8. CLOSING OF PROJECT

Access to microdata is only valid for the period specified in the research proposal. At the end of that period, you must:

- destroy any original scientific-use files sent by Eurostat and any confidential data derived from the files (and sign the relevant form: [project closing declaration](#)), and
- send Eurostat the references to your research results (<https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/Results-from-microdata>).

In deciding on the project end-date take into account the length of the process of publication of research results which might require access to data.

## 9. ACCREDITATION OF THE ACCESS POINT IN RECOGNISED RESEARCH ENTITIES

Access point is the separate room located in the premises of a research entity where researchers may access European **secure use files remotely**. These files are otherwise available only in Eurostat safe centre in Luxembourg. The access point shall be set in a way to reduce physical risks such as eavesdropping, unauthorised observation of activities and loss or theft (the access point cannot be the open, public space). The door to the room must be lockable.

The research entity wishing to host an accredited access point must fulfil all conditions specified below:

- Be recognised as a research entity by Eurostat (full list: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/203647/771732/Recognised-research-entities.pdf>)
- Be located in the following countries :
  - ✓ the EU countries as well as in Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein (covered by Regulation 557/2013 and by the GDPR) and in Switzerland (covered by Regulation 557/2013 and by the GDPR on the basis of a separate agreement), including EU institutions, bodies and agencies and international organisations based in these countries;
  - ✓ the countries covered by adequacy decisions .
- Fulfil the organisational requirements specified in section 6.2.1 of the [Guidelines for the assessment of research entities, research proposals and access facilities](#) and in the [rules of use of access points](#).
- Fulfil the technical requirements specified in section 6.2.2 of the [Guidelines](#) and in the [rules of use of access points](#).

Use this [form](#) to apply for accreditation of the remote access point.

## 10. FORMS

- [Application form for research entities](#)
- Confidentiality undertaking and terms of use (samples only, not to be filled in):
  - ✓ [standard EU/EEA model](#) (see footnote 1),
  - ✓ [non EU/EEA model](#) (see footnote 1),
  - ✓ [model for international organisations](#).
- [Terms of use of confidential data for scientific purposes](#)
- [Microdata Access Workflow Tool](#) (on line form for submission of research proposal)
- [WORD version of the research proposal](#). This form can help you prepare the application for access to European microdata. It may also be useful to collect information from other organisations involved in the project (in case of a network project). It cannot be used to make a request for microdata access. Submit your requests via [Microdata Access Workflow Tool](#).
- [Individual confidentiality declaration](#) – sample only, not to be filled in (please read the terms of the confidentiality declaration; you will receive this document for signature after the first evaluation of the research project proposal by Eurostat).
- [Guidelines for publications](#) (thresholds to be respected when publishing results based on microdata)
- Forms and guidelines for running research proposals:
  - [EU login tutorial](#)
  - [User Guide to Microdata Access Workflow Tool](#)
  - [Instructions for data download](#)
  - [Declaration of data destruction](#)
- Amendment forms:
  - ✓ [Form to ask staff changes](#)
  - ✓ [Form to ask project extension](#)
  - ✓ [Form to add partner organisation](#)
  - ✓ [Form to add a dataset](#)
  - ✓ [General form for changes](#) (for changes not covered by dedicated forms)

- [Application for accreditation of the remote access point](#) (for access to secure use files – CIS and SES only)

## 11. LINKS

- [List of recognized research entities](#)
- [Guidelines for the assessment of research entities and research proposals](#)
- [Self-study material for European microdata users](#)
- Datasets dedicated pages:
  - ✓ [European Community Household Panel \(ECHP\)](#)
  - ✓ [Labour Force Survey \(LFS\)](#),
  - ✓ [Community Innovation Survey \(CIS\)](#),
  - ✓ [European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions \(EU-SILC\)](#),
  - ✓ [Structure of Earnings Survey \(SES\)](#),
  - ✓ [Adult Education Survey \(AES\)](#),
  - ✓ [European Road Freight Transport Survey \(ERFT\)](#),
  - ✓ [European Health Interview Survey \(EHIS\)](#)
  - ✓ [Continuing Vocational Training Survey \(CVTS\)](#)
  - ✓ [Information and Communications Technologies \(ICT\) usage by Households and Individuals](#)
  - ✓ [Household Budget Survey \(HBS\)](#)
  - ✓ [Harmonised European Time Use Survey \(HETUS\)](#)
  - ✓ [Farm Structure Survey \(FSS\)](#)

## 12. ROLES OF DIFFERENT ACTORS IN A RESEARCH ENTITY

### **Duly designated representative of the entity**

- signs the application form for the research entity;
- signs a confidentiality undertaking and initials the terms of use;
- is someone with the authority to make commitments on behalf of the organisation, e.g. a university chancellor, research vice chancellor, managing director, president or similar.



**Contact person in the research entity:**

- coordinates submission of research proposals at the level of the entity;
- countersigns each research proposal submitted by researchers linked to the entity; the contact person confirms by his/her signature that all persons named in the research proposal are employed by, or are formally related to (e.g. PhD students), the research entity;
- informs researchers named in the research proposal about the obligations laid down in the terms of use of confidential data;
- in a network project, confirms participation of individual researchers from the entity, if another research entity is co-ordinator;
- is identified in the application form for the research entity and confidentiality undertaking;

**Principal researcher:**

- submits and signs the research proposal and the individual confidentiality declaration;
- identifies individual researchers participating in the research project;
- is granted access to the secure platform with confidential data for scientific purposes;
- is responsible for the lawful access to confidential data for scientific purposes for all researchers named in the research proposal;
- protects confidential data for scientific purposes in accordance with the conditions specified in the relevant documents (confidentiality undertaking and terms of use, and individual confidentiality declaration);
- informs Eurostat of any changes to the research proposal;
- follows the guidelines for publication attached to the data;
- at the end of the project:
  - ✓ provides Eurostat with a copy of all reports, which have been produced using the data;
  - ✓ destroys received microdata and derived files after expiration/completion of the research project;

**Data manager indicated in the research proposal (if different from principal researcher):**

- is granted access to the secure platform with confidential data for scientific purposes;

- is responsible for the practical access to confidential data for scientific purposes for all researchers named in the research proposal;
- protects confidential data for scientific purposes in accordance with the conditions specified in the relevant documents (confidentiality undertaking and terms of use and individual confidentiality declaration);
- destroys received microdata and derived files after expiration/completion of the research project;

**Individual researcher(s) named in the research proposal:**

- signs individual confidentiality declarations (each separately);
- protects confidential data for scientific purposes in accordance with the conditions specified in the relevant documents (confidentiality undertaking and terms of use and individual confidentiality declaration);
- follows the guidelines for publication attached to the data.

All persons must immediately inform Eurostat about any breach of the confidentiality rules laid down in the confidentiality undertaking, terms of use and individual confidentiality declaration.

**13. CONTACT INFORMATION**

- Mailbox for requests to be recognised as a research entity:  
[ESTAT-ENTITIES-ASSESSMENT@ec.europa.eu](mailto:ESTAT-ENTITIES-ASSESSMENT@ec.europa.eu)
- Mailbox for general questions:  
[ESTAT-Microdata-access@ec.europa.eu](mailto:ESTAT-Microdata-access@ec.europa.eu)