



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
EUROSTAT

Directorate B: Methodology; corporate statistical and IT services  
**Unit B-1: Methodology and corporate architecture**

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## **HOW TO APPLY FOR MICRODATA?**

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## 1. ACCESS TO MICRODATA – OVERVIEW

### 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

**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).

**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 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) on electronic devices (CD-Rom, DVD, etc.) 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 sign a [confidentiality undertaking with the terms of use](#). Note that there is a [separate model of confidentiality undertaking for entities located in non EU/EEA countries](#)<sup>1</sup>.

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.

**If you want to apply for research-entity recognition, please fill in [the application form for research entities](#) and send it by email to [ESTAT-ENTITIES-ASSESSMENT@ec.europa.eu](mailto:ESTAT-ENTITIES-ASSESSMENT@ec.europa.eu).**

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<sup>1</sup> The standard model of confidentiality undertaking is for entities located in the EU, EEA 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, Jersey, New Zealand, United States – entities belonging to EU-US Privacy Shield, Eastern Republic of Uruguay (see more: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/data-protection/international-transfers/adequacy/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/data-protection/international-transfers/adequacy/index_en.htm)). The separate model is for entities located in other countries.

### 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
- 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;

#### Drafting of research project description



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.

#### 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).

#### Validation of research projects

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

#### Changes to research proposals

- 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.
- The adding of new data sets, new releases or new partner organisations to an existing research proposal always requires a consultation with the national statistical authorities. In such a case a NEW research proposal form relating to the previous one needs to be submitted.

## Check before you apply for microdata

Before you apply for microdata please check if you fulfil all pre-conditions. Please note that from January 2017 the research proposal applications in MS Word format are replaced by webforms. At once, an automated system to handle the application procedure (Microdata Access Workflow Tool) is launched.

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 participating in the research project 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 acces website</a> (or links below).	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>You have EU-login</b> (former ECAS) allowing you to submit research proposal via Microdata Access Workflow Tool system (if you don't have it, please create it here: <a href="https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/cas/login">https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/cas/login</a> )	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have read the <a href="#">Quick User Guide to Microdata Access Workflow Tool</a> (optionally)	<input type="checkbox"/>

**When you are ready to submit a research proposal, please fill in [the research proposal application webform](#) 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.

## 4. CONTACT INFORMATION

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

## 5. FORMS

- [Application form for research entities](#)
- Confidentiality undertaking and terms of use (samples only, not to be filled in):
  - [standard EU/EEA model](#),
  - [non EU/EEA model](#).

Please read the terms of the confidentiality undertaking from the samples. You will receive these documents for signature after recognition of your research entity.

- [Research proposal application webform](#)
- [WORD version of the research proposal](#) (for information only, not to be used for application submission!)
- [Individual confidentiality declaration](#) – sample only, not to be filled in (Please read the terms of the confidentiality declaration from the sample. You will receive this document for signature after the first evaluation of the research project proposal by Eurostat.)

## 6. LINKS

- [List of recognized research entities](#)
- [Guidelines for the assessment of research entities and research proposals](#)
- [Quick User Guide to Microdata Access Workflow Tool](#)
- [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 \(CVTS\)](#)
- [Community Statistics on Information Society \(CSIS\)](#)
- [Micro-Moments Dataset \(MMD - Linked micro-aggregated data on ICT usage, innovation and economic performance in enterprises\)](#)
- [Household Budget Survey \(HBS\)](#)

## **7. 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;
- receives the medium containing 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):**

- receives the medium containing 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:**

- sign individual confidentiality declarations (each separately);
- protect 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);
- follow 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.