JOINT ACCESS TO NORDIC MICRODATA

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A Nordic model of cooperation

## A new model covering national micro data about 25 million persons in 6 countries
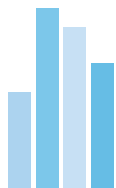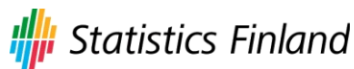
Background

- The Nordic countries have a long tradition of collecting data for statistical purposes from administrative systems
- Data covers the entire national population by means of long-term data series of high quality
- All Nordic Statistical Institutions (NSI's) give national researchers access to de-identified micro data
- register-based research is prominent in the Nordic countries

However, **cross Nordic register research is still very rare**

Thus, the Nordic NSI's have agreed on a common Nordic model on data access which will make is easier for researchers to analyze register data from more than one country

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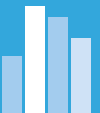
We will transfer micro data from one Nordic NSI to another

The main achievement is that we have agreed to transfer de-identified micro data from one NSI to another if data are needed in a cross Nordic research project

We have agreed to use the three existing remote access systems in Finland, Sweden and Denmark to give Nordic researchers access to data from all 6 countries

An example…

Includes all "Social Data" in the NSI's

All data in the NSI on:

- Population
- Living conditions
- Labour and unemployment
- Earnings and income
- Education and knowledge

Not (yet) included: Health data and enterprice data

Still a decentralized model

We still want to keep all decision-making about national data within each NSI. Consequently, the model is still fairly decentralized:

- All approvals for access to data will be kept at national level
  - Approvals of users as well as projects

- All selection and preparation of national data will be carried out by the each NSI:
  - Guidance
  - Data extraction
  - De-identification
  - Transfer of data to the data-hosting country
  - All prices are calculated according to National rules
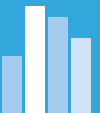
A decentralized model but ...

We have agreed on:

- a common application form containing the information needed from all Nordic countries
- a step-by-step description on how to get access to micro-data
- a common Nordic security agreement (to be signed by all researchers as well as each relevant NSI)
- an agreement between the relevant NSI's on the data transfer to ensure a common understanding of the regulatory environment, including elements on data security
- a structure for communication between the NSI's about data security breaches

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Preconditions for the trust between the Nordic countries

Cultural similarities
Well established welfare states/democracies
Long tradition for Nordic corporation

Similarities in the political/administrative system surrounding data use and data protection:
Rather similar legal basis to give researchers access to
High levels of security in the way researchers are given remote access to micro data

A set of common rules and agreements are set up to support the mutual trust
But agreements cannot be made exhaustive.
Trust has to develop as we move along