



Republic of North Macedonia
State Statistical Office



Access to microdata in the State Statistical Office of the Republic of North Macedonia

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Introduction

- State statistics is an independent professional activity, which conducted on a scientific basis, provides users (legal and natural persons) with data on the economy, demography, social life, environmental protection and other areas.



Introduction

- Using statistical data of high quality in the decision-making process at macro and micro level is significant for the planning process in the country
- In this process, one of the most important users of microdata is the scientific research community



Introduction

- The SSO provides access to microdata (data on people, households or businesses) to support the research community
- The research community has the possibility for in-depth complex analysis using microdata
- Access to microdata is carefully managed to protect confidentiality



Legal framework

- The protection of confidential information is ensured with the legal instruments:
 - The Law on State Statistics
 - The Law on Personal Data Protection
 - EU Regulations and SSO internal documents, appropriate handbooks and rulebooks



Legal framework

- A special article in the Law on State Statistics is dedicated to ensuring the protection of confidential data and access for the scientific community

Article 41 of the Law on State Statistics

The Office and authorised bodies may, upon written request, give individual data without identification data on the reporting unit, only to registered research organisations and researchers for scientific and research purposes, if the user ensures all protection measures prescribed by law and other regulations.



Legal framework

- A number of general procedures have been established at the SSO with respect to storing, handling and protecting individual data, and measures have been put in place to monitor the implementation of the general procedures for data confidentiality, such as:
 - Form for requesting access to anonymised microdata
 - Confidentiality declaration
 - Rules on work organisation in the protected safe room, etc.



Administrative, methodological, technical and organisational measures

- The Director of the SSO has established an advisory body – the Statistical Confidentiality Committee
- Requests for accessing anonymised microdata and the fulfilment of the necessary conditions are considered by the Committee
- The right of access to anonymised microdata is based on signed agreements and declaration of confidentiality protection



Administrative, methodological, technical and organisational measures

- Work with anonymised microdata is enabled in a protected environment, i.e. “safe room” in the SSO
- Access will be given to available microdata, metadata and information about the quality of the data
- All outputs, in electronic format, must be checked and approved by SSO experts before they can be removed from the safe room



Registration of researchers

- Researchers who are interested in having access to microdata need to submit a request to the Office
- Requests must be approved by the Director General
- Researchers who used microdata in the Office are registered in the Register and are included in the list of potential data users



Registration of researchers

- Using microdata increases the value of data that are provided in the SSO
- Some cases of using microdata in the SSO:
 - Econometric analysis to identify the causative effect of the minimum wage on salary increases, employment and working hours
 - Models for analysis of factors that affect the price of labour
 - Correlation of the conditions and causes of poverty in urban and rural areas
 - The impact of the macroeconomic employment policy factors that influence innovation and the performance of small and medium enterprises



Conclusion

- The Law on State Statistics allows researchers access to microdata
- The policy on access to microdata for scientific research purposes is not aimed at limiting access, but rather to make the access procedure simpler with a view to establishing clear and transparent procedures
- It is a matter of public interest when detailed analyses based on anonymised microdata are available to decision makers as well as the entire public.



Conclusion

- Users of microdata need a more flexible procedure to access microdata in order to be able to work at a distance from the SSO.
- The SSO should consider the option to share microdata through Eurostat remote access, by providing permission for sharing submitted data for the most requested data sets



THANK YOU

