

## ACCESS TO INDIVIDUAL DATA FOR SCIENTIFIC PURPOSES

### PUBLISHING GUIDE

#### I. INTRODUCTION

This guide explains how individual data provided for scientific purposes will be stored and used, and the results of research - published by researchers. Researchers must read the guide before using individual data and follow the publication rules set out below. In accordance with the terms of use of the individual data signed by the duly designated representative of the research entity, researchers are required to comply with this publication guide.

**Researchers should ensure that any research results, published or disseminated, do not contain information that could identify individual statistical units (individuals, households, businesses, etc.). In all reports, analyzes, including all unpublished publications and papers, researchers must ensure strict application of the Publication Guide, which is attached to confidential data for scientific purposes.**

#### II. WHAT IS CONFIDENTIAL DATA?

Individual data is confidential if respondents can be identified. Simply removing the name and address details from the microdata files does not prevent the identification of the respondents who participated in the research.

Unusual characteristics of the respondent may lead to his identification. The scientific files provided to researchers on electronic devices are prepared in such a way that it is difficult to identify the respondents in the research. This is done in particular by:

- reducing the level of detail in the data
- modifying certain values
- and / or suppressing risky records or variables.

#### III. WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO PROTECT THE CONFIDENTIALITY (IDENTITY) OF RESPONDENTS

Confidential data for scientific purposes contains information provided by individuals or organizations. Each record in the individual data files represents information provided by

respondents. Researchers may be granted access to individual data (access to microdata) in order to perform statistical analyzes for scientific purposes (in accordance with Law 93/2017 (art. 20)).

**Researchers who have been granted access to individual data may use the data only for statistical analysis for scientific purposes.**

**Researchers should not try to identify the individuals or organizations represented in the files.**

Disclosure of individual information constitutes a breach of the law, but also a breach of the trust that respondents place in the statistical office. Such a breach could harm the reputation of the statistical system and lead to a reduction in the quality of official statistics.

#### IV. CONDITIONS OF ACCESS

Only researchers belonging to a recognized research entity may request access to individual data for scientific purposes.

Access to individual data for scientific purposes may be granted if:

- the research proposal was approved; each research proposal must be countersigned by the contact person identified in the confidentiality undertaking;
- all researchers requesting access to individual data for scientific purposes must sign a confidentiality declaration.

**Researchers must keep individual data files secure to ensure it is not accessible to anyone who are not authorized to access such data.**

**The results of the statistical analysis, which may contain information on individual respondents, should also be kept secure.**

Electronic media containing individual data for scientific purposes must be stored in a locked room to which access is restricted to authorized persons only.

Confidential data for scientific purposes must be stored on a password-protected computer. Access to data should be limited to the authorized researchers named in the research proposal.

Intermediate results of the analysis containing confidential data must be stored in a protected environment.

After the expiry or completion of the project indicated in the research proposal (or in case of denial of access by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)), the researchers must destroy the data set and any data or variables derived from it and sign a declaration of destruction. files provided by the NBS.

## V. TYPE OF INDIVIDUAL DATA

Individual data for scientific purposes are available in the form of:

- *scientific use files* - confidential data intended for scientific purposes to which statistical disclosure control methods are applied in order to reduce to an appropriate level, in accordance with current best practice, the risk of identifying the statistical unit, delivered to researchers on electronic devices;
- *secure use files* - confidential data intended for scientific purposes to which no other method of controlling statistical disclosure has been applied, which are only available in the NBS Secure Room.

## VI. DATA MATCHING

Researchers should not attempt to link individual data with other (including public) data sets, unless explicitly agreed with the Statistical Office. Matching two data sets can lead to the identification of statistical respondents included in both data sets.

## VII. WHAT TO DO IF THE RESEARCH PROJECT IS MODIFIED

The research proposal is valid for the purpose specified in the research project, period, data sets and research entities. A new research proposal must be submitted to the NBS if any of the following situations occur:

- the data are to be used for a new research project;
- a different data set is needed;
- a new research entity joins the project.

If more recent data are required for the ongoing research proposal and / or a researcher is replaced or added to the team from the same research entity participating in the project, the contact person of the research entity must inform the NBS of these. written changes (no need to submit a new research proposal). An individual confidentiality declaration must be signed by each researcher participating in the project.

## VIII. OBLIGATIONS OF THE PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER AND THE INDIVIDUAL RESEARCHER

Principal Researcher:

- is responsible for the legal access to individual data for scientific purposes for all researchers named in the research proposal;
- protects individual data for scientific purposes in accordance with the conditions specified in the relevant documents (confidentiality undertaking, terms of use and individual confidentiality declaration);
- informs the NBS of any change in the research proposal;
- sends to the NBS a copy of all reports that have been made using the data;
- is responsible for destroying the confidential data received and the derived files after the expiration / completion of the research project.

Individual researcher (s):

- sign the individual confidentiality declaration;
- protects individual data for scientific purposes in accordance with the conditions

specified in the relevant documents (confidentiality undertaking, terms of use and individual confidentiality declaration).

- are responsible for the destruction of confidential data received and derived files after the expiration / completion of the research project.

## IX. RESPONSIBILITY OF RESEARCH ENTITY TO PROTECT INDIVIDUAL DATA

The confidentiality undertaking signed by the duly appointed representative of the research entity and the individual confidentiality declaration signed by the individual researcher shall be the basis for legal action in cases where the conditions of these documents have been intentionally ignored.

The NBS may take action in the event of a breach of confidentiality, as follows:

1. by withdrawing from the researcher and, where appropriate, from his / her research entity, the possibility to access the individual data;
2. by requiring the research entity to take disciplinary action against the researcher;
3. by requesting compensatory damages of civil law from the research entity;
4. by filing a complaint or reporting the violation to law enforcement under national law.

Depending on the situation, sanctions may be applied to researchers or their research entities.

## X. LEGAL BASIS

Law No. 93/2017 on official statistics is the legal basis for granting research entities access to individual data for scientific purposes.

## XI. QUESTIONS?

If any issues raised in this guide are unclear or if you have additional questions regarding the use of individual data, please contact us: [moldstat@statistica.gov.md](mailto:moldstat@statistica.gov.md)