



Information for visiting researchers at the Deutsche Bundesbank's Research Data and Service Centre

Last updated: October 2018

1 General remarks

The Research Data and Service Centre (RDSC) provides researchers – insofar as the law allows¹ – with access to selected micro data collected by the Deutsche Bundesbank. Visiting researchers should take note of the following information to ensure that their research visits go as smoothly as possible.

Before data users are granted access to micro data, they are required to sign a non-disclosure agreement. This will remain valid once their research visit has ended and will apply to any future projects using RDSC micro data. Any breaches of the obligations under the agreement can result in data users being denied access to micro data collected by the Bundesbank.² In the case of particularly sensitive micro data, a user agreement is concluded with the applicant institution, establishing the rights and obligations of both parties.

All generated results are subject to disclosure control and may be used in publications etc following their approval. Publications themselves are also subject to disclosure control and may only be published following their approval.

2 Organisational and technical remarks

2.1 Organisational remarks

Data users are required to arrange an appointment for viewing and analysing micro data at one of the RDSC's visiting researcher workstations at least one week in advance. Appointments may be arranged by e-mail only. The workstations at the RDSC are allotted on a "first come, first served" basis. Data users will not be entitled to use any of the workstations until they have received a reservation confirmation from the RDSC.

With regard to timing, it should be taken into account that the volume and complexity of the micro data requested will determine how long it will take for the data to be made available.

If the duration of the research visit is several days, the RDSC team will request a temporary pass that will be given to data users on their first visit to enable them to access the Bundesbank's premises during the entire period.

2.2 Technical remarks

While at the Bundesbank, data users will receive what are referred to as visiting researcher user IDs, which give them highly restricted access rights compared with those of Bundesbank employees. Furthermore, visiting researchers will not be able to save data either to external hard drives via USB ports or to CD/DVD drives. Use of personal computers (laptops, tablets) and telephones is strictly forbidden in visiting researchers' rooms. Non-compliance with this rule can result in access to micro data being denied. The aim is to ensure that micro data do not leave Bundesbank premises.

If visiting researchers compile program codes before their research visit and wish to use these at their workstation, these must be submitted to the RDSC by e-mail at least two working days prior to their visit so that they can be made available at their workstation.

¹ For example, section 16 of the Federal Statistics Act (Bundesstatistikgesetz), section 9 of the Banking Act (Kreditwesengesetz) and the Foreign Trade Act (Außenhandelsgesetz).

² Reidentification is generally punishable under sections 21 and 22 (concerning the ban on reidentification and the associated penal provision) of the Federal Statistics Act.

2.3 External data provision

Aggregated external data that are to be merged with the micro data provided by the RDSC must be made available well in advance of a research visit to the RDSC. Furthermore, grounds for the need to merge external data with the micro data provided must be given in a few sentences to the staff member performing the check; these must be comprehensible and refer to the project objective.

If data users intend to merge data, they must provide the RDSC with a detailed description of the procedure, the source of the external data and a list of attributes for the external data.

2.4 Prototype program code

The required analytical program structure is specified in a prototype program code. The purpose of this program code is to enable RDSC staff to comprehend the results generated as quickly as possible and thereby reduce the amount of time needed for disclosure control. The prototype program code will be sent to data users well in advance of their research visit so that they have time to familiarise themselves with the requirements.

2.5 Data storage

Data users are required to write their syntax in such a way that they do not put an unnecessary drain on the RDSC's computing and storage resources. Once temporarily stored data are of no further use, they should be deleted immediately. In exceptional cases where permanent data storage is necessary, this should take up as little memory as possible.

2.6 Path length of the stored files

Please note that the path length of stored files in your project folder should not exceed 130 characters (complete path including filename) and that your project folder path already occupies up to 70 characters. Files with paths longer than 130 characters might not be possible to restore which could result in the loss of the file.

3 Data analysis software

The RDSC provides **STATA** (currently version 15) and **Matlab** (currently version R2016b) as its standard tools for analysing micro data. Other software can be made available on a case-by-case basis and under exceptional circumstances. Such usage of other programs than STATA and Matlab needs to be agreed upon in advance and in writing with der RDSC. Please note that analysis results need to have the format required by the RDSC.

For more information please see the document "Disclosure control regulations for research results with regard to data confidentiality (output control)" under the following link: <https://www.bundesbank.de/resource/blob/617956/592a90cf634461b802494cbe21b509d1/mL/regulations-output-control-data.pdf>

4 Analysis results

Data users must comment on their chosen approach in terms of their project objective within the program code in such a way that the staff member performing the check can quickly understand the calculation steps performed.

When compiling the analysis results, a corresponding log file should be created for each program code used, so that the results can be better understood in terms of the individual analysis steps taken. It is important that this log file can be edited. Wherever possible, the results can be exported either into a format that can be edited using a spreadsheet (.csv) or as a results table. If necessary, the program code used and the checked results can be sent to data users after their research visit. As a rule, results submitted for disclosure control in a .xls or .xlsx file will not be accepted or published.

Furthermore, data users should take into account that staff availability at the RDSC to check results is limited. For this reason, data users are required to ensure that the volume of their results is proportionate in relation to their project objective. In the event that the program codes or results submitted for disclosure control do not comply with the requirements set out here, the staff member performing the check can, if necessary, demand that this be remedied.

5 Disclosure control

With regard to the disclosure control of results, data users must ensure that the checks carried out by the RDSC are kept to a minimum. The results are checked by an RDSC staff member on the basis of the following criteria.

- Number of observations
- Minimum and maximum values
- p%/dominance rule
- Non-disclosure requirement for overarching tables
- Previous results
- Diagrams

6 Publication of research papers

Prior to the publication of every research paper containing results from analyses conducted at the RDSC, the results are subject to disclosure control by the RDSC for the reidentification of individual observation units. The relevant criteria are listed under section 5. Prior to submitting your research paper, we therefore ask you to check whether it contains any micro data. If the disclosure control by the RDSC finds that it still contains micro data, you will then be required to submit a corrected version of the research paper. At least five working days are needed for every submission and resubmission for disclosure control.

Please note that every diagram and/or table should be referenced using the following standard template.

Source: Research Data and Service Centre (RDSC) of the Deutsche Bundesbank, <name of the micro dataset used from the standard RDSC list (where appropriate with the common abbreviation)>, <period during which the micro data were collected>, own calculations.

Example: Research Data and Service Centre (RDSC) of the Deutsche Bundesbank, Microdatabase Direct investment (MiDi), 1999-2012, own calculations.

Following publication, a sample copy should be sent to the RDSC at no cost; by e-mail would suffice.

7 Opening hours

In general, the workstations for visiting researchers at the RDSC are available for use during the following periods:

Monday to Thursday from 8.00 to 17.00

Friday from 8.00 to 15.00

The RDSC is not open for research visits at weekends or on public holidays.

8 Contact details

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