



## Policy on Access to Research Microdata Files

The Department is committed to supporting the re-use of data collected for analytical and policy-making purposes in a secure, efficient and transparent way, in line with the Public Service Data Strategy 2019-2023<sup>1</sup> and the National Statistics Board Strategic Priorities for Official Statistics – 2021-2026<sup>2</sup>. We are also at all times committed to ensuring that the integrity and confidentiality of client company microdata is maintained.

Three classifications of data are used, each of which has associated arrangements in relation to access and security.

1. **Source Tier** – This is the ‘raw’ microdata which includes identifying variables, including company name.
2. **Analysis Tier** – This is similar to the source tier microdata, but has been ‘pseudonymised’ through the removal of names and other unique identifiers (with the exception of an anonymised identifier number for each company).
3. **Published data** – Aggregated statistical data which has been protected using statistical disclosure controls (SDC).

### Source Tier Access Arrangements

Access to Source Tier survey microdata is available to a limited number of DETE staff (those gathering and analysing the data within the Data and Evaluation Unit of DETE) and named individuals in the enterprise agencies who require client data to monitor their performance. Subject to consideration and approval by the Head of the Data & Evaluation Unit, staff within DETE but outside the Data and Evaluation Unit, may be granted access to Source Tier data for the purposes of applied policy research that informs enterprise policy development (as per the wording on the survey questionnaires).

### Analysis Tier Access Arrangements

Access to Analysis Tier microdata files can be made available to Government Departments, State Agencies or other third parties (for example, researchers engaged in policy analysis, or consultants working on behalf of one of the aforementioned organisation types) subject to our Access Criteria. While Analysis Tier data does not contain direct identifiers, there is still a risk of disclosure through indirect identification, and access to Analysis Tier data is therefore strictly controlled by DETE.

### Analysis Tier Access Criteria

- Access shall only be provided for scientific and research purposes only. Researchers and their organisations must have a proven track record in data analysis or research. Access to Analysis Tier microdata will not be granted to individuals who are working in organisations that have a vested interest (that is, have a material interest in the activities or business

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/1d6bc7-public-service-data-strategy-2019-2023/>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.nsb.ie/media/nsbie/pdfdocs/NSB\\_Statement\\_of\\_Strategy\\_2021\\_2026.pdf](https://www.nsb.ie/media/nsbie/pdfdocs/NSB_Statement_of_Strategy_2021_2026.pdf)

performance of a particular enterprise or set of enterprises) in any of the enterprises that exist in the microdata. Access to Analysis Tier microdata will also not be granted to media or related organisations (DETE does not grant access to Analysis Tier microdata for reasons of statistical confidentiality, but other non-confidential statistical products, such as Open Data, are available to facilitate media re-use).

- Researchers must submit a clear and specific research proposal, acceptable to the Head of the Data and Evaluation Unit. The analysis/research undertaken must comply or be consistent with the specific purpose for which the access was granted.
- Researchers are required to sign an Approved Researcher Agreement, which requires that researchers use the data only for the purposes outlined in the submitted research proposal, and that they do not disclose any information relating to a client company that comes to their knowledge through their use of DETE microdata.
- Researchers are provided with Analysis Tier microdata which has a selection of variables that has been tailored to their research proposal in line with data minimisation best practices.
- Researchers access microdata using a secure login to a DETE PC at an on-site hot desk. The hot desk PC has restricted functionality to prevent copying or transmission of data by means including email and portable storage devices.
- The researcher will be permitted to take only non-confidential aggregate data off-site for further analysis. Researchers must abide by the Statistical Disclosure Controls (SDCs) prescribed by the Data and Evaluation Unit to protect the confidentiality of client firms. The Data and Evaluation Unit will review the aggregates produced to check that they are non-confidential in nature.
- The Department has the right to perform any statistical disclosure control that it deems appropriate to any output which is based on the research carried out using Department RMFs.
- The Department reserves the right to monitor the implementation by researchers of their Confidentiality Agreement, up to and including audits by the Department, access logging and recording of hot desk sessions.

## Published Data Access Arrangements

The reports and statistics produced through the AES and ABSEI surveys are available free of charge to all users via the Department's website. In line with Government policy the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment is committed to publishing open data so that its outputs are accessible to and reusable by the widest possible audience. For further details on the dissemination of published data see our [Dissemination Policy](#).

## Requesting Access to Research Microdata Files

Please email [surveys@enterprise.gov.ie](mailto:surveys@enterprise.gov.ie) to request an RMF Application Form.