

DATA CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY AT GEOSTAT

Data confidentiality protection policy, development of its principles and rules, and use of information only for statistical purposes are important objectives of the National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat).

Geostat confidentiality policy is determined by professional independence of the institution, the Georgian law 'On Official Statistics', the Geostat regulations and the Georgian Law 'On Personal Data Protection'. Geostat also shares the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and the European Statistics Code of Practice principles, which define the essence of confidentiality.

Geostat aims, on one hand, to meet user demands and provide them with high quality data; on the other hand, to act in compliance with the conditions and perform duties prescribed by the legal acts and instructions on confidential data protection.

The article 4 of Georgian law 'On Official Statistics' stipulates that data about physical and legal persons collected by a producer of official statistics for statistical purposes are strictly confidential and may be used exclusively for statistical purposes.

Any information collected for statistical purposes making it possible to identify an observation unit or such information can be obtained, is qualified as confidential statistical data.

The law 'On Official Statistics' (article 28) states that 'The data collected for the purpose of producing official statistics shall be confidential if it allows for identification of an observation unit or it is possible to identify such data through it'.

The law 'On Official Statistics' regulates data confidentiality protection issue. The confidential statistical data shall not be issued or disseminated or used for a non-statistical purpose but for the exceptions envisaged by the Georgian legislation (Article 28). The confidential statistical data collected and processed for the purpose of statistical survey shall not be used or disseminated either for the personal, academic, research or any other activities, by the employees of the units of the Geostat (article 29).

Geostat tries to find and maintain a balance between provision of high quality data to users and the requirement of confidential data protection, so that there is minimal risk of individual data disclosure.

Geostat is obliged to strictly protect from disclosure the data collected in order to produce statistical data, so that it can gain and maintain confidence of data providers. This is possible if to perform their confidentiality related duties Geostat staff always have and continue developing relevant knowledge, methodology and information technology.

When performing its duties Geostat enforces the following fundamental confidentiality principles:

- **Confidential data management.** Geostat has the utmost respect for respondents' primary data, ensures their confidentiality and exclusive use for statistical purposes.
- **Exclusivity of the statistical purpose.** Management and use of the collected data is carried out only for statistical purposes (unless there is an exception stipulated in Georgian legislation).
- **Prohibition of use for non-statistical purposes.** The use of individual data for administrative purposes is strictly forbidden and the Geostat takes every necessary precaution to enforce this requirement.

- **Publicity of statistical data.** In accordance with the law 'On Official Statistics' official statistics provide an indispensable element in the information system of a democratic society, serving the government, the economy and the public with data on the economic, demographic, social and environmental situation in full compliance with the rules of confidentiality.
- **Use of statistical data for scientific purposes.** Geostat provides researchers with access to deidentified datasets for scientific purposes with appropriate legal and methodological guarantees in place.
- **Individual-level information disclosure prohibition.** In the process of statistical data dissemination – taking into account the relevant provisions of the law 'On Official Statistics' – the disclosure of individual-level information on the survey unit is strictly forbidden.
- **Transparency of data protection.** Geostat regularly provides the public with general information on its data protection activities and practices.
- **Ensuring organisational safeguards.** Geostat applies regulatory, administrative, technical, methodological and organisational measures to ensure the physical and logical protection of individual data.
- **Obligations of Geostat staff.** It is important that all staff know, understand and incorporate confidential information governance best practice into their daily roles. All employees sign a Confidentiality reminder. In case of leaking primary data statutory measures will apply.
- **Statistics sent to international organisations.** Sending of tabulated personal or business statistics to international organisations must always be based on an act, regulation, decree or other such agreement. The tables are then protected according to the instructions and recommendations defined in the agreement concerned.

Geostat guarantees full compliance with the above listed confidentiality principles and regularly informs the public on the activities performed to protect confidentiality.