

Rule on Access to Confidential Data for Scientific and Research Purposes

Article 1. Purpose of the rule on access to confidential data for scientific and research purposes

1. The rule on access to confidential data for scientific and research purposes (hereinafter referred to as “the rule”) establishes the conditions under which a Legal Entity of Public Law “The National Statistics Office of Georgia” (from now on referred to as “Geostat”), can, based on a relevant request, ensure the availability of its individual data for scientific and research purposes following the Georgian legislation.
2. The rule is developed based on Article 37 of the “Law of Georgia on Official Statistics”.

Article 2. Definition of terms

1. The terms used in the rule have the following meanings:

- a) Individual data** – the most detailed level of data about statistical units, including personal data, as defined by the “Law on Personal Data Protection”;
- b) Confidential data** – information collected for statistical purposes that allows the identification of a statistical unit;
- c) Aggregated data** – the result obtained through the processing of individual data (for example, the sum);
- d) Identifier** – a set of characters that allows for the unique identification of a statistical unit, including its name, exact geographic location, or identification number. With an identifier, direct identification is possible; in particular, a specific statistical unit can be identified based on one identifier or a combination of identifiers. Identification by any other means is considered indirect identification;
- e) Indirect identifiers** – characteristics common to several respondents that, when combined with other data, can be used to determine the identity of the respondents;
- f) Anonymisation** – data processing in such a way that all direct and indirect identifiers are removed from the research data to prevent the identification of an individual respondent;
- g) Statistical unit** – a unit with statistical characteristics, including a natural person or a legal entity.

Article 3. General principles

1. The Law of Georgia on Official Statistics provides the basic legal framework for the development, production, and dissemination of national statistics. This law allows users to access individual data to promote scientific progress.
2. Geostat's goal is, on the one hand, to meet the requirements of users and provide them with high-quality data, and on the other hand, to fulfil the conditions and obligations in the legal acts and instructions related to the protection of confidential data.
3. All direct and indirect identifiers, such as personal number, address, and name, are deleted from individual data files. Extreme values and similar indirect identifiers are corrected using appropriate statistical methods. All files are appropriately anonymised to minimise the risk of disclosure.

Article 4. Users of individual data

1. Individual data are mainly intended for specialised users, such as:
 - a) civil servants and researchers hired by ministries and other public agencies responsible for the development of strategies and programmes at the self-governing, regional, and national levels, which also implies control and evaluation of the implementation of said programs;
 - b) international institutions involved in research, to determine the possibilities of assistance and development in their fields of activity;
 - c) research and higher education institutions involved in social and economic research;
 - d) professors and students mainly involved in the educational field;
 - e) other users involved in scientific research.

Article 5. Registration of users of individual data

1. All users who intend to access individual data should be registered through the Geostat website.
2. Individual data can be used by those persons who indicate the purpose of data use in the registration form (Annex No. 1) and agree to the conditions specified in this document.
3. Before providing individual data, Geostat must ensure that the party receiving the data has the necessary technical and organizational infrastructure to ensure their confidentiality following the legislation of Georgia.
4. Geostat will review the registration application submitted by the user within 5 working days and inform them about the decision.

Article 6. Obligations of users

1. When using individual data, users must comply with the following conditions:
 - a) not to attempt to identify a natural/legal person in any way (including by comparing this data with other individual data);
 - b) not to disclose individual data to a third party (person) other than the parties to the agreement (see Article 7), and/or not to use this data for a purpose other than the purpose specified in the relevant request;
 - c) not to disclose aggregated data obtained from individual data that can be used to identify a statistical unit indirectly;
 - d) to destroy individual data upon completion of the scientific and research project.

Article 7. Agreement on access to individual data

1. In the event of receiving a research application from Geostat, an individual data access agreement is signed between Geostat and the user.
2. The contract is concluded for no more than three years.

Article 8. Fee for services provided by Geostat

1. To cover the extra costs of preparing and transmitting individual data, Geostat is authorized to establish a corresponding service fee, which is determined by agreement between the parties.

Article 9. Transitional and final provisions

1. The user must protect Geostat's copyright on individual data following the law and ensure the reference to the source of the information.
2. Geostat is not responsible for the loss, damage, or other undesirable consequences caused by information users and any other party due to using its data, including loss of time, money, reputation, and other resources. In turn, users must indemnify Geostat from any liability that may result from their misuse of data. Geostat is also not responsible for aggregated data incorrectly processed and interpreted by users.
3. This rule is subject to periodic revision. Making changes and additions to it is carried out by the Geostat's Council following the rules provided by the legislation.