

Protocols/procedures for licensed data access requests to the Pacific Data Hub – Microdata Library

The Pacific Data Hub Microdata Library allows researchers access to a wide range of Pacific Island development data. Many datasets are available under specific license and conditions. They are labeled accordingly, and when they are accessed by users, users agree to comply with all of the conditions (terms of use) of the respective licenses.

Suggested eligibility criteria

License application requests will not be considered unless researchers satisfy the following eligibility criteria.

- Researcher(s) must be affiliated with a credible research and/or teaching institution, such as an accredited university or recognised research organisation or an NGO
- Researcher(s) must either have a proven track record of analysing large datasets or in the case of students, must have a supervisor or thesis adviser who could oversee her/his work
- Researcher(s) must accept and adhere to the terms of use (SPC) and any other specific conditions outlined in a signed Data License Agreement (between SPC and data owner) and stipulated in Data Access Agreement (DAA) between the researcher and SPC or under a 3rd party license between data owner and the researcher.
- Researcher(s) must agree to provide the final output of his/her work as a report, paper or otherwise. All data sources must be cited in the produced work.

Suggested selection criteria

For one's research to be selected, the proposal must satisfy the following quality criteria:

- Researcher(s) must satisfy eligibility requirements as outlined above
- The quality of the proposal must be high and must fully develop the following points:
 - Good justification for and significance of chosen topic is provided
 - Outline how the data will be used and specifically how the research will be compiled
 - Not replicating analysis already conducted or ongoing.
 - Research questions are clearly stated and answerable based on analysis to be conducted (this requires specifics and if more information is required must be provided).
 - Methods clearly explained on how the analysis will be done and how it will be appropriate for answering study questions (if there is a disconnect between study subject and the dataset there needs to be more clarity how research can be achieved).
 - The dissemination approach or plan of results should be described.

- Explain how the work on the analysis will be undertaken between team members (roles of each research team member clearly defined).

Suggested review committee (for consideration)

Establishing a standing committee which approves each microdata release, and which has clear rules when the release requires approval of the country Government Statistician

A review committee could be considered to deal with Microdata License Access via the Pacific Data Hub Microdata Library requests to ensure that requests are given due consideration. The committee could be composed of four or five persons, including members of the SPC Statistics for Development Division, data owners and possibly include legal representation via SPC's Legal and Risk Office. It should include at least one member who is familiar with the dataset (SPC or NSO/NSS member). The review committee will be responsible reviewing the licensed microdata requests and relevant research proposals, and decide whether or not to grant access to the data to the researchers. The committee will provide advice to the data owner (such as the Government Statistician or NSO) on the eligibility or criteria they have used to determine whether access should be given. But the data owner is the overall decision maker in determining data access requests.

Members of the committee will also agree to review final reports and draft manuscripts for publications from the selected researchers once the research has completed.

Transfer of microdata

Once the license application request including research proposals have been selected, the selected researchers will be asked to sign an agreement (either Data Access Agreement DAA or 3rd party license) in which the terms of use are clearly stated in accordance with the data sharing protocol/method specified by the data owner (NSO). The relevant sections of the dataset will then be transferred to the researchers along with the accompanying materials known as external resources (additional instructions/ manuals, e.t.c, as appropriate).

Follow up

Selected researchers applying for licensed access to microdata need to produce an output or piece of research as specified in their application request. Researchers will be given specific language for acknowledging the use of the dataset in their research to be used. Research should include proper acknowledgement of the data source used for their research and the citation must clearly define the data source for example:

"Samoa Bureau of Statistics, Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2018 (HIES 2018), Version 01 of the licensed dataset (2018) provided by the Microdata Library.

<https://microdata.pacificdata.org/index.php/home>"

For data owners such as NSOs to derive the most benefit from partnership with the research community, arrangements should be made with those who have been provided access to microdata to ensure the statistical outputs of their work are provided back to the data owner. Users of microdata should also be encouraged to provide constructive feedback on data quality as result of their analysis. Such information can be invaluable when designing future collections.

Data Not Available

In some cases it is not possible to make data available, or access is not granted by the data owner either because the data are too sensitive, or have been lost or damaged. However, users may still benefit from the available metadata for these datasets.

License Specified Externally

In some cases the Pacific Data Hub Microdata Library provides metadata for datasets available externally from third-parties such as the WHO STEPS, UNICEF MICS or Demographic Health Survey (DHS). Users should use the provided link to visit the external website, agree to the data license, and access the data if possible via these sources.

Monitoring of requests and any data release

Accurate monitoring of microdata license request applications and any data release is considered critical to ongoing sustainability. It is important that both all requests and all releases or decisions not to release be listed somewhere.

It is important to increase public confidence that microdata are being used appropriately and to show that decisions about microdata release are taken on an objective basis. It is up to the NSO to decide whether, how and to whom microdata can be released. But their decisions should be transparent.