

How to gain remote access to research data?

An agreement on remote access

The customer contacts Statistics Finland's researcher services and supplies to Statistics Finland an account of their data protection and data security practices related to remote access use. Statistics Finland draws up a contract about the opening and maintenance of remote access. The agreement defines the terms of use and specifies the organisation's administrative and technical contact person.

A license to use statistical data

After signing the agreement on remote access, the customer applies for a license to use statistical data. The license specifies the data to be used as well as who will be using it. Every researcher using statistical data will sign a pledge of secrecy which, along with the mobile phone numbers and e-mail addresses of the persons using the remote access service, will be included in the application for the license.

After granting the license, Statistics Finland and the customer draw up a contract about the data to be used and the data's remote access users, as well as the price for both the data sets and remote access. In addition, each person using remote access must provide a data security report about the premises where the data will be used.

Researcher's remote access to data

Statistics Finland opens remote access to the remote access system from the IP address precisely defined by the customer. Using an encrypted e-mail Statistics Finland will send the researcher a personal username and password with which he/she can log in to the remote access system for the first time. After this the researcher receives a new password to his/her mobile device each time he/she logs in.



FIONA remote access service enables researchers to access detailed research data and improves data protection

Statistics Finland 

 CSC CSC-IT CENTER FOR SCIENCE

What does remote access to research data mean?

The FIONA remote desktop is a protected data processing environment for unit-level data needed in research. In the remote access system, the researcher has his/her own data storage for research data, analysis results, and codes.

The researcher gains access to Statistics Finland's server from his/her workstation via a virtual private network. The researcher works within the closed FIONA system. Research data is transferred to the user as a desktop view only. The IT Center for Science (CSC), administered by the Ministry of Education and Culture, together with Valtori (Government ICT Centre) are responsible for the technical maintenance of the service.

Research results and other material may only be transferred outside the system through a screening process. The purpose of the screening process is to make sure that individuals or enterprises cannot be identified from the released data.

The data sets used in research are priced separately but the use of the remote access system is priced according to usage time. More information on basis for charging and prices is found on Statistics Finland's website:
http://tilastokeskus.fi/tup/hinnat/tutkimuspalvelut_en.html

User-friendly

- The possibility to have a shared workspace even if the researchers are in different organisations
- Possible to combine data from different government agencies on the same desktop
- As much capacity for usage and storage as needed
- Several programs for statistical analysis available for researchers (SPSS, STATA, R, SAS)
- Can be used anytime, technical support during office hours
- With a separate agreement, use is also allowed via research organisation's network from home and abroad (EU and ETA countries as well as some other countries).
- Possible to gain access to data sets from which direct identification data have been removed

Safe

- Research data are on Statistics Finland and CSC's server
- Research results and other material may only be transferred outside the system through Statistics Finland's screening process
- Each researcher has a personal username
- Each time a researcher logs in he/she receives a new password to his/her mobile device
- Log monitoring
- Virus scanning
- Automatic backup

Agreements are required

- To open remote access an agreement is needed between Statistics Finland and the research organisation
- A license to use statistical data as well as a separate agreement on research services are also required