JOINT ACCESS TO NORDIC MICRODATA

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A NORDIC MODEL OF COOPERATION

A NEW MODEL COVERING NATIONAL MICRO DATA ABOUT 25 MILLION PERSONS IN 6 COUNTRIES
The Nordic countries have a long tradition of collecting data for statistical purposes from administrative systems. Data covers the entire national population by means of long-term data series of high quality. All Nordic Statistical Institutions (NSI’s) give national researchers access to de-identified micro data. Register-based research is prominent in the Nordic countries. However, cross Nordic register research is still very rare. Thus, the Nordic NSI’s have agreed on a common Nordic model on data access which will make it easier for researchers to analyze register data from more than one country.
We will transfer micro data from one Nordic NSI to another

The main achievement is that we have agreed to transfer de-identified micro data from one NSI to another if data are needed in a cross Nordic research project.

We have agreed to use the three existing remote access systems in Finland, Sweden and Denmark to give Nordic researchers access to data from all 6 countries.

An example...
Includes all “Social Data” in the NSI’s

All data in the NSI on:

• Population
• Living conditions
• Labour and unemployment
• Earnings and income
• Education and knowledge

Not (yet) included: Health data and enterprise data
Still a decentralized model

We still want to keep all decision-making about national data within each NSI. Consequently, the model is still fairly decentralized:

- All approvals for access to data will be kept at national level
  - Approvals of users as well as projects

- All selection and preparation of national data will be carried out by the each NSI:
  - Guidance
  - Data extraction
  - De-identification
  - Transfer of data to the data-hosting country
  - All prices are calculated according to National rules
A decentralized model but ...

We have agreed on:

• a common application form containing the information needed from all Nordic countries
• a step-by-step description on how to get access to micro-data
• a common Nordic security agreement (to be signed by all researchers as well as each relevant NSI)
• an agreement between the relevant NSI’s on the data transfer to ensure a common understanding of the regulatory environment, including elements on data security
• a structure for communication between the NSI’s about data security breaches
Preconditions for the trust between the Nordic countries

Cultural similarities
Well established welfare states/democracies
Long tradition for Nordic corporation

Similarities in the political/administrative system surrounding data use and data protection:
Rather similar legal basis to give researchers access to High levels of security in the way researchers are given remote access to micro data

A set of common rules and agreements are set up to support the mutual trust
But agreements cannot be made exhaustive. Trust has to develop as we move along