

This is the publication of the document “Researcher Data Agreement”.

This document is part of a group of three documents that are used by the Modelling Human Environmental Interactions Group at the Institute of Geographical Sciences, Freie Universität Berlin (Germany) for complying with the Freie Universität’s “Statutes for Safeguarding Good Research Practice”*, Section 9 Usage rights, paragraph (1): “Regulations on rights to use research results are to be produced at the earliest possible date and documented in writing.”

Related documents are:

- Student Data Agreement (<http://dx.doi.org/10.17169/refubium-46355>)
- Research Data Management Plan of the Modelling Human-Environment Interactions Research Group, Freie Universität Berlin (<http://dx.doi.org/10.17169/refubium-46357>)

* <https://www.fu-berlin.de/en/sites/gwp/informationen/satzung/index.html>

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Researcher Data Agreement

Version 1.0, February 2025

Between the Modelling Human-Environmental Interactions Group at Freie Universität Berlin, represented by Jun.-Prof. Dr. María Piquer-Rodríguez, Institute of Geographical Sciences, Freie Universität Berlin, Malteserstraße 74/100, 12249 Berlin, hereinafter referred to as the "MHEI Group",

And [Name of Incoming Researcher], hereinafter referred to as the "Researcher".

Date: [Date]

Background:

The Modelling Human-Environmental Interactions Group at Freie Universität Berlin establishes rules for its academic staff and visiting researchers in accordance with Freie Universität Berlin's Research Data Policy¹ and "Statutes for safeguarding good scientific practice (GWP statutes)"². The handling of research data by the members of the group must be in accordance with the above cited regulations.

Legal aspects and fairness:

The ownership of usage rights of research products, including research data, may be regulated in funding agreements, cooperation agreements, or research permissions. If there are any rights, standards or guidelines related to the research topic or research subjects, they must be followed. With this agreement, we specify the interests, rights and obligations of members of the MHEI Group. It may be necessary to carry out further individual assessments of cases where ownership of the intellectual property in relation to the data is vested solely in the researcher(s) and/or specific research institutions. Any possible legal conflicts between previous agreements and the Research Data Agreement must be reviewed before signing this agreement. In case of conflicts of interest between the Researcher and the Head of the MHEI Group, e.g., on the use of research data or the publication of data, attempts will be made to find a fair solution for all parties.

Agreement:

1. Collaboration with MHEI group:
 - 1.1. The *Researcher* grants the MHEI Group the non-exclusive right to use, store, and analyze the data generated for research purposes.
 - 1.2. The project leader as well as the *Researcher* have access to the directory on TROVE where the project data is stored and backed-up. If the data are to be shared with another person, the project leader assigns the appropriate rights to access the MHEI storage options to this person.
 - 1.3. In general, the Research Data Management Plan for the MHEI acts as a guideline on how to handle data during the stay of the *Researcher*.

¹ Freie Universität Berlin. 2021. „Research Data Policy of Freie Universität Berlin“. <https://doi.org/10.17169/refubium-32141>.

² Freie Universität Berlin. 2024. "Statutes for Safeguarding Good Research Practice". <https://www.fu-berlin.de/en/sites/gwp/informationen/satzung/index.html>.

2. Confidentiality:

- 2.1. The *Researcher* shall maintain the confidentiality of any sensitive or proprietary information belonging to the MHEI Group that they may come across during their tenure.
- 2.2. The handling of personal data is covered by the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)³, defined in more detail in Germany by the supplementary regulations of the Federal Data Protection Act (BDSG), the data protection legislation of the Länder (LDSG), and specialized legislation (e.g., legislation for schools or statistics). Researchers who deal with personal data must comply with these fundamental legal requirements (Art. 2 (1) GDPR)³. It might be necessary to anonymize certain research data. Sensitive personal data needs to be encrypted when transferring or storing. Consent forms for interviews or surveys are a common way to ensure compliance with data protection regulations. Existing MHEI consent forms should be used as a reference. Personal data has to be obtained and processed in such a way that, as far as possible, it can be used in accordance with this agreement or in anonymized form.

3. Publication and Acknowledgment:

- 3.1. Any publication or presentation of the data generated by the *Researcher* as a member of the MHEI Group shall acknowledge the MHEI Group's contribution.
- 3.2. The MHEI Group members will acknowledge the *Researcher's* contributions to data generation when reusing the *Researchers* data.
- 3.3. The *Researcher*, as part of the MHEI Group, supports open and FAIR data⁴. Research data, including materials, information, methods, and software used to obtain research results will be made publicly available in reasonable time. Workflows established to produce project results should be reasonably documented together with published data.
- 3.4. The *Researcher* and MHEI Group members shall decide together whether, at which time and to what extent project results will be publicly available. They are guided by Freie Universität Berlin's Research Data Policy⁵ and "Statutes for safeguarding good scientific practice (GWP statutes)"⁶ as well as by guidelines of the project's funding agency.
- 3.5. Preferred repositories for data publications are domain specific (see re3data and consult with your project leader and/or Freie Universität Berlin's research data management team).
- 3.6. Licenses for the data publication: licenses should be chosen according to the principle "as open as possible, as restricted as necessary"; FU recommends CC0 or CC BY in its Research Data Policy⁷.
- 3.7. The MHEI Group supports the CARE principles⁸. CARE stands for Collective Benefit, Authority to Control, Responsibility, and Ethics. The concept aims to empower Indigenous People and engage researchers with Indigenous Peoples rights and interests.

³ Official Journal of the European Union. 2016. "General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) ". <https://gdpr-info.eu/>

⁴ GO FAIR, FAIR Principles <https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/> (access: 11.04.2024)

⁵ Freie Universität Berlin. 2021. „Research Data Policy of Freie Universität Berlin“. <https://doi.org/10.17169/refubium-32141>.

⁶ Freie Universität Berlin. 2024. "Statutes for Safeguarding Good Research Practice". <https://www.fu-berlin.de/en/sites/gwp/informationen/satzung/index.html>.

⁷ Creative Commons. N.d. "About Creative Commons". <https://creativecommons.org/share-your-work/licenses/>.

⁸ Carroll, S, et al. 2020. "The CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance". *Data Science Journal*, 19: XX, pp. 1–12. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5334/dsj-2020-043>

4. Backup of Data:

- 4.1. Members of the MHEI Group back up their research data on the Freie Universität Berlin server TROVE to secure data availability and to avoid data loss.
- 4.2. TROVE can be accessed by any centralized computer of the research group. These computers are connected to Freie Universität Berlin’s ZEDAT network account and can be accessed via (Z:) MHEI ([\\trove.storage.fu-Berlin.de](http://trove.storage.fu-Berlin.de)). A description on how to connect to network folders can be found in the welcome document or on the MHEI Wiki.
- 4.3. Within the TROVE, the following folders should be used: *[data_project]*, *[script]*, *[figures]*, *[references]*. The data needs to be zipped and archived to TROVE *[archived]* / *[researchers_name]* once the project is finished.
- 4.4. The naming of the folders and data created follows the naming agreements of the MHEI group: snake_case, name_date_version (only if more than one version per day exist, then _v01, _v02, _final can be added to the file name). The date follows the YYYYMMDD structure.
- 4.5. Organize and annotate data folders in a sensible way so that data can be shared and reused. Documentation deposited alongside data files should enable users to understand how the research was carried out and the meaning of the data.
- 4.6. Backup data files by copying project folders to the TROVE backup system is the responsibility of the *Researcher*, but we recommend a 3-month backup strategy. In case older files should be kept, the older files must be renamed accordingly.

5. Retention of Data:

- 5.1. The *Researcher* agrees to provide the MHEI Group with a copy of the data generated during their tenure before leaving the group.
- 5.2. The data has to be retained in the premises of the MHEI Group for 10 years after it has been generated group without prior explicit consent of the Reseacher. In compliance with the statutory provisions, the data can be retained for longer. Otherwise, the data will be deleted.

6. Deletion of Data

- 6.1. If data is agreed to be deleted (by means of a data agreement) the deletion must be recorded in a deletion protocol, according to [GWP Satzung FUB 2024 EN](#) page 5.

7. Termination

- 7.1. This agreement shall terminate upon mutual agreement by both parties.

I, [Name of Researcher], hereby acknowledge that I have read, understood, and agree to abide by the terms and conditions outlined in this Data Agreement between myself and the MHEI Group. By signing below, I confirm my acceptance of the data ownership, usage rights, confidentiality, and other provisions detailed herein. I understand that my compliance with these terms is essential to the successful collaboration between myself and the MHEI Group. My signature below serves as my commitment to fulfill the obligations outlined in this agreement.

Signatures:

Date

Place

[Signature of MHEI Group Leader]

[Signature of Researcher]

[Printed Name of MHEI Group Leader]

[Printed Name of Researcher]