



REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA



MINISTRY OF GENDER, CHILDREN AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

LIBERIA SOCIAL SAFETY NET (LSSN) PROJECT

**Liberia Household Social Registry
Data Sharing and Protection Protocol**



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Acronyms

Abbreviation	Description
SP	Social Protection
MoGCSP	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
LHSR	Liberia Household Social Registry
MIS	Management Information Systems
CD	Compact Disk
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
IAA	Inter-Agency Agreement
LISGIS	Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services

1. Introduction

1. The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) which is mandated to coordinate the implementation of the country's social protection system and establish the Liberia Household Social Registry (LHSR). The purpose of building the LHSR is to consolidate into a single common database, structure and organize key information about current and potential beneficiaries of social programs in order to create single entry, point for the citizens to access the main social protection programs. For that purpose, the LHSR database is composed of the household-ranked according to their level of poverty (non-poor / poor / extremely poor). In addition to the variables of socio-economic categorization, the database contains individual information from each of the household members; biometrics of every household member above the age of 16 to ensure effective identification of people and to decrease the chances of duplication; photograph of each household member; and geolocation of households. Any social program may apply their own inclusion criteria to screen for potential eligible beneficiaries from the LHSR database.

2. The LHSR is being developed with the following objectives:

- Identify the unprivileged, vulnerable, the marginalized or the poor and make it possible for programs to identify target population faster
- Increase transparency and accountability
- Reduce the duplication in coverage of various Social Programs allowing feedback between programs
- Enable centralized oversight of policy and budget planning through effective management and allocation of resources
- Faster transition of beneficiaries between SP schemes
- Increase the efficiency of the operational processes of the SP Programs by the reduction of redundancies and duplication in operational activities such as targeting and case management
- Increase knowledge on issues on poverty and vulnerability
- Contribute to institutional strengthening of the MoGCSP through the implementation of a reliable and modern database of vulnerable groups

3. Data collection with LHSR begun in 2020 and so far, 1,024 households in 5 communities (Weajor, Gbarnga, Cornia, Peenpen, and Beh Town) in Dowein District, Bomi and 4 communities (Wuo's Town, Gbasselah, Waitapea and Menyem) in Nimba Counties have already been enumerated. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has provided an initial funding of USD\$4.6 million for Strengthening of the National Social Safety Net System in Liberia. The LHSR will continue the enumeration in 4 counties (Bomi, Bong, Nimba and Maryland) after which it shall be extended to the 11 remaining counties of Liberia.

4. LHSR will assist Social Protection (SP) programs to identify, prioritize and select households living in vulnerable conditions to ensure that different social programs deliver quality services to their target population. Given this background, the LHSR will share data with other social programs and any other agency (NGO, public, private) for their own use following the data sharing protocol.

5. **The datasharing protocol establishes the rules and defines the nature of data to realize their intended use and the conditions of their release.**

2. Terms and Concepts

A) **Microdata:** These are electronic data files which contain information about units of observation. A unit of observation in the LHSR database is a household and/or an individual. These data files are organized in a way that each record contains information about one unit of observation. This information is stored in variables. Variables can be of different types (e.g. numeric or alphanumeric, discrete, or continuous, etc.). They can be obtained directly from the respondent via a questionnaire or by observation or measurement (e.g. by GPS positioning) or imputed or calculated. Microdata files are stored in form of coded values. For

example, the sex of the respondent may be stored in a variable named 'B.3.': this would include values 1 or 2, where 1 is the code for male and 2 for female. Therefore, microdata must be accompanied by a data dictionary containing the list of variables, a description of their content and the meaning of each code used.

- B) **Macro data or Aggregated Data:** Provides a summarized version of this information in form of means, ratios, frequencies, or other summary statistics.
- C) **Dataset:** Comprises of multiple data files often resulting from multiple levels of observation in the same data collection operation. In LHSR case, data is collected in three levels: the household (with, for example, variables describing dwelling characteristics), the individual (with, for example, information on age, marital status, education level and economic activity), and the Community (with, for example, information on schools, hospitals, hand pump, key landmarks, etc). The dataset may comprise of one or multiple file(s) at each of these levels. The data files contain some variables named key variables. These allow users to link information from one file to another. Datasets organized thus are named hierarchical datasets.
- D) **Sharing of Data:** For purposes of this protocol, sharing refers to any mechanism through which microdata is made available to users/programs/organizations etc. It includes mechanisms whereby data is released to users as well as to those where data is made available without actually being released.
- E) **Public Release of Data:** This is a sharing mechanism where microdata files are provided to the public using a variety of media (Hard drive, Flash drive, CDs, Internet, etc). The defining characteristic of public release is that any user from the public can be in possession of the microdata without special legal status or special arrangements. The microdata will not contain identifiable or potentially identifiable information. Users will be asked to agree not to try to obtain the identity of respondents. As LHSR does not retain any oversight of the data once released, LHSR assurance of confidentiality is based on the disclosure review and not on the agreement of the user.
- F) **Special Use Agreements:** In some circumstances, data which is not released publicly may be provided by LHSR through a special data use agreement that provides for LHSR oversight over the use of the data. Data which cannot be publicly release will not be made available outside LHSR without a data user's signed written agreement to provide such safeguards as are necessary. The agreement must be countersigned by the Liberia Social Safety Nets (LSSN) National Coordinator designee.
- G) **Controlled access to microdata:** Access to microdata refers to making data available to users through a mechanism other than public release or special use agreements. In this case, users have access to the microdata but are not in possession of the data. LHSR exercises more direct supervision of the data use in order to protect confidentiality. For example, users may receive access to microdata through the LHSR Data Enclave. This is a facility at LHSR equipped with a computer not linked to the internet or an external network and from which no information can be downloaded via USB ports, CD-DVD or other drives.
- H) **Confidential Information:** That information given to LHSR with explicit understanding that it will not be shared with an unauthorized party. In the case of LHSR, authorization is secured by means of the informed consent process during which respondents' agreement is obtained concerning which, if any, parties may have access to identifiable data concerning them. For purposes of this protocol, LHSR adheres to the established confidentiality principles in the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR): Integrity and confidentiality — "Processing must be done in such a way as to ensure appropriate security, integrity, and confidentiality (e.g. by using encryption)."
- I) **Identifiable data:** Is any tabulation, record, or file which can be used to establish individual or establishment identity, whether directly (using items such as name, address or unique identifying number) or indirectly (by linking data about a respondent with other information that uniquely identifies the individual).
- J) **Confidentiality protection:** Removal or suppression of information that could identify a data collection questionnaire respondent to any unauthorized entity. The manner in which data collected by LHSR is to be

used and reported is specified in this protocol. Unless explicitly specified in the consent and agreed to by the respondent or other data source, LHSR protects the confidentiality of all identifying information obtained through its data collection systems.

- K) **Informed Consent:** Agreement of the respondent or data source to participate in a LHSR data collection activity after being fully informed of the nature of that activity.
- L) **Collaborator:** Collaborator or collaborating parties are those with whom LHSR has a formal working relationship. In most circumstances, a formal working arrangement is defined in such documents as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Inter-Agency Agreement (IAA) but may also be defined in other appropriate instruments. A collaborator must have established a formal working arrangement with LHSR at the initial planning and design stages. A collaborator can be, but is not limited to, SP Programs, other government agencies, universities, organizations, colleagues, and others working outside LHSR with whom LHSR has a formal working arrangement, as defined in this document. Collaborators may participate in data quality assurance/quality control and, accordingly, view microdata files as part of the eventual data release process.

3. Purpose Statement

6. The purpose of the LHSR data sharing protocol is to:
- Provide a framework for secure and confidential sharing of data
 - Ensure personal information is handled in a sensitive manner and only disclosed on need-to-know and need-to-use basis
 - Provide a basis where anonymized data about a household and/or beneficiary or member can be shared without consent in a form where the identity cannot be recognized
7. In particular, the Protocol aims to provide microdata in order to:
- Create a transparent procedure to increase usage of LHSR data to lay additional services to social protection programs
 - Improve planning, policy formulation and decision-making across social protection sectors through additional analyses.
 - Increase transparency and accountability and mitigate duplication of data collection work.
 - Increase the quality of data through feedback received from data users.
 - Support the research community to ensure that optimum usage is made of the data collected by the LHSR.

4. Applicability and Scope

8. This Protocol is applicable to all the primary data collected by LHSR through its various surveys or other data collection mechanisms. Microdata files are intended for specialized users with advanced quantitative skills. This includes but is not limited to:
- Social Protection Programs for selecting their beneficiaries from LHSR targeted households.
 - Policymakers and researchers.
 - International agencies and other sponsoring agencies.
 - Research and academic institutes involved in social and economic research.
 - Academic staff and students
 - Other users involved in scientific research.
9. LHSR will provide different products aimed at different audiences:
- i. Macro data providing High-level summaries (tables, graphs, analyses), intended generally for a wide audience and made available via publications and through the LSSN website.
 - ii. Macro data files and Datasets aimed at researchers from various institutions including government agencies and ministries, non-governmental organizations, research institutes, academia, and

international bodies. These will be known as the “research community”. Legal and commercial use do not fall into this category.

10. Microdata will be made available only after the official release of data for the relevant data collection. Reasonable steps shall be taken by LHSR to ensure data provided is processed, accurate, up-to-date, and complete.

11. A committee will be constituted under the chairmanship of the Honorable Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection to decide which new datasets may and should be made available for access under this protocol. The committee members will include: The LSSN National Coordinator, the LHSR Program Manager, A representative of each of the main SP Programs, and a representative of the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS).

12. All data users will be encouraged to provide feedback to LHSR which may help improve the quality of the surveys and other data collections as well as statistical products and publications.

13. This Protocol could be amended with the approval of the Honorable Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection and all amendments will be published on the LSSN website.

14. The Protocol will be evaluated after one year and thereafter at regular intervals as decided by the Honorable Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection.

15. An updated register of all the requests (with dates, requesters and action taken) will be maintained on the LSSN Management Information System (MIS).

16. All potential users, government ministries/organizations or private entities or academic institutions or individuals, who are desirous of obtaining macro data from LHSR are covered under the scope of this Protocol and will have to follow the laid down procedures in this protocol to obtain the microdata.

5. Guiding Principles

17. The LHSR recognizes the role of the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS) as principal agency responsible for the collection and analysis of statistical data in Liberia. Therefore, the results obtained by LHSR in its data collection processes do not in any way replace the official data release by LISGIS. Similarly, LHSR following the guidelines of LISGIS, as the statistical agency in Liberia, adheres to its principles and standards.

18. Because of the aforementioned, LHSR assumes the commitment to comply with the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics¹.

6. Dissemination Protocol

19. The final decisions about data sharing will only be made after the data has been collected, processed, and reviewed for unique disclosure issues. The strategies for sharing will begin at the time data collection activity is being planned. Concerns about procedures for data sharing in general and in regard to particular data components will be addressed during the planning processes, particularly for collaborative activities. Despite this, LHSR has the power to address at any time of the data collection process how data quality will be evaluated, and decisions made concerning when data cannot be disseminated due to failure to meet quality standards.

6.1. Modalities of Microdata Files for Dissemination

¹United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/dnss/gp/fundprinciples.aspx>

20. As a rule, the microdata files that LHSR will disseminate are the cleaned and edited files. In case any SP Program requires raw microdata files, a special request is required where the requestor on behalf of the SP Program explains the purpose and use of the data. This request must be reviewed by the LHSR Program Manager and approved by the LSSN National Coordinator.

21. In the event that raw data file request is made by an entity or person other than an SP Program, LHSR would need to adjust the content and/or number of records. The content of records in microdata files for sharing will be edited by suppressing information from direct and indirect identifiers to protect the anonymity of respondents. The process of suppressing information does not necessarily mean removing variables. In some cases, re-coding variables into less detailed categories to make them less informative would be sufficient; or in other cases would require truncating the number of records contained in a disseminated microdata file – especially in the case of population census data as a way to guarantee the anonymization. The decision on what type of adjustment will need to be applied to the data will always be the power of LHSR, after having evaluated the reasons for the information request.

22. In the context of this Protocol, five (5) modalities of files will be disseminated. These files differ in their level of accessibility to users and the extent to which they are anonymized.

6.1.1. Social Protection Programs Files

23. These are the files to be shared with the SP Programs to apply their own inclusion criteria to screen potential eligible beneficiaries. These will be non-anonymized cleaned and edited files. For this reason, each SP Program shall develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) before starting any data sharing process.

6.1.2. Public Use Files (PUFs)

24. Will be available to anyone agreeing to respect a core set of easy-to-meet conditions. Such conditions relate to what can be done with the data (e.g. the data cannot be sold, etc.), These PUFs will be available online since the risk of identifying individual respondents is considered minimal. For that purpose, all content that can identify respondents directly will be eliminated—for instance, names, addresses and telephone numbers. In addition, all relevant indirect identifiers will be purged from the microdata file, e.g.: geographical information below the sub-national level.

6.1.3. Licensed Files / Research Files

25. The sharing of this category of files is restricted to users who have received authorization to access them after submitting application documents and signing an agreement governing the LHSR data use. The licensed files will be anonymized by removing direct identifiers such as Household Member's names to ensure the risk of identifying individuals. The data files may, however, still contain indirect variables that could identify respondents by matching them to other data files such as voter's IDs database, National ID database, etc.

6.1.4. LHSR Data Enclave

26. Some files will be offered to users under strict conditions in a data enclave. The LHSR data enclave will contain data that is particularly sensitive or that allows direct or easy identification of respondents. Examples include complete population census datasets, and certain personal related datasets containing highly confidential information. Users interested in accessing the data enclave will have access to the approved particular data subset they have requested for. Interested users will be required to complete an application form demonstrating the legitimate need to access the data to fulfil a stated statistical or research purpose. The outputs generated must be scrutinized by LHSR for a full disclosure review before release.

6.1.5. Remote Job Submission

27. This approach is designed for users to conduct analyses of confidential data by creating a process that enables them to submit data processing and analysis programs remotely to the LHSR data depositor. The user is given a synthetic dataset that replicates the structure and content of the actual datasets. This enables the researcher to develop programs using tools such as SAS, SPSS, or Stata. The programs are then transmitted to the LHSR data depositor staff, who run the job against the actual dataset. The results will be vetted for disclosure and returned to the user. This process could have a cost for the requester.

7. Conditions for Dissemination of Data

28. Although LHSR has the commitment to make the data collected as broadly available as practicable, this process operates under a legal and ethical obligations that place restrictions on the manner in which the data can be disseminated. In this regard, standards have been established depending on the type of microdata requested, but in any case, all data users shall acknowledge that any available property rights, including copyright in the data, are owned by LHSR and ensure that proper citations are used.

7.1. Conditions for Social Protection Programs Files

29. Since the data for SP Programs will be non-anonymized cleaned and edited files; each SP Program shall develop an MoU with MoGCSP before starting any data sharing process. The MoU will establish the guarantees to ensure the confidentiality, appropriate use of data, fields to be included in each record, format of the files, periodicity of data exchange, channels for data sharing and data update mechanisms.

7.2. Conditions for Public-Use Files (PUFs)

30. The conditions for Public-Use Files (PUFs) will be open to anyone with access to an LSSN website or MIS. However, some good practice statements defining suitable uses for and precautions to be adopted in using the data will be implemented as a way to sensitize the user although this is not legally binding. The key statements to be used are:

- a) Data and other material provided by the LHSR will not be redistributed or sold to other individuals, institutions, or organizations without LHSR written agreement.
- b) Data will be used for statistical and scientific research purposes only. Data will be employed solely for reporting aggregated information, including modelling, and not for investigating specific individuals or households.
- c) No attempt will be made to re-identify households or its members, and there will be no use of the identity of any person or establishment discovered inadvertently. Any such discovery will be reported immediately to LHSR.
- d) No attempt will be made to produce links between datasets provided by LHSR or between LHSR data and other datasets that could identify individuals or households.
- e) Any books, articles, conference papers, theses, dissertations, reports, or other publications employing data obtained from LHSR will cite the source, in line with the citation requirement provided with the dataset.
- f) An electronic copy of all publications based on the requested data will be sent to the LHSR.
- g) The original collector of the data, LHSR, and the relevant funding agencies bear no responsibility for the data's use or interpretation or inferences based upon it.

7.3. Conditions for Licensed Files / Research Files

31. The conditions to apply for licensed / research files include the basic common principles (set forth above) plus some additional ones applying to the researcher's organization. There are two options: firstly, data could be provided to a researcher or a team for a specific purpose; secondly, data could be provided to an organization under an inter-institutional agreement for internal use, e.g. to an international agency (World Bank, UNICEF, etc.) or research agency. In both cases, the researcher's organization must be identified, as a suitable representative to sign the data agreement. If data is provided for an individual research project, the research team must be identified. This is covered by requiring interested users to complete a formal request to access the data (see annex). As mentioned, the conditions to obtain the data in this case are the same than for Public-Use Files (PUFs) plus:

- a) The researcher's organization must be identified, as well as the principal and other researchers involved in using the data must be identified. The principal researcher must sign the data agreement on behalf of the organization. If the principal researcher is not authorized to sign on behalf of the receiving organization, a suitable representative must be identified.

- b) The intended use of the data, including a list of expected outputs and the organization's sharing protocol must be identified.

7.4. Conditions for LHSR Data Enclave

32. The data enclave will be located at the LHSR Headquarters and will be used to give researchers access to complete data files but without the risk of releasing confidential data. LHSR staff will supervise access and use of the data. The computers will not be able to communicate outside the enclave and the results obtained by the researchers must be screened for confidentiality by an LHSR staff before taken outside. A model of a data enclave access protocol and a model of a data enclave access request form is provided in Annex(??)

8. Procedure for Applying and Obtaining Micro data

33. The steps to apply and obtain microdata will be the same for all modalities, with the exception of Social Programs where data sharing shall be governed by an MoU that will be established between the Social Program and LHSR.

34. The key steps for applying for micro data are:

- a) The requester will be required to apply in the prescribed format for the specific modality (see annexes below). These application form may be downloaded from the LSSN website.
- b) Once the requester has completed filling out the form, the completed form should be sent to the e-mail address established for this purpose. The email address will be provided on the LSSN website.
- c) The requester will be informed through email about the receipt of the application forms not more than 48 hours after the receipt of the email.
- d) LHSR will respond to all requests within 2 weeks of receipt of a request form complete in all respects.

9. Application Assessment

35. To avoid confusion in the processing of the application, each application form shall be checked for completeness, immediately it is received. Each application form should be accompanied by a duly signed cover letter. The template for the cover letter is provided in Annex below. Any inconsistency in the application form should be quickly clarified. Once this is done, the manual (printout) form should be stamped with a date of receipt. In case of multiple clarifications (as a result of incomplete information), the date of acknowledgement of formal receipt should be considered as the last date of correctly filled application form.

Criteria for Technical Assessment

Rule	Description
First Rule	Because macro data is anonymous, any request for macro data with clear purpose will be recommended for authorization.
Second Rule	In case of multiple and complex research questions (needing more time to analyze) but with clear purpose, the request may be granted but LHSR reserves the right to provide the information in anonymized format. As a matter of rule, LHSR shall aim to provide the request in anonymous format. For example, detailed listing of household level characteristic and household members' characteristics may be provided without listing the names.
Third Rule	Personal data (like names and address of registered program applicants or beneficiaries) should only be shared out on a "need to know basis" and must be restricted to only the information necessary to meet the purpose of the request. The

organization must demonstrate that the data request is aimed at performing an activity of humanitarian or protection nature. The best interest of the beneficiary will be considered paramount to the evaluation criteria, to ensure their safety, dignity and rights are preserved. Overall, the beneficiaries' best interest takes precedence even when a request is legitimate because of the sensitivity and security of personal information.

The applicant's organization should demonstrate that they have the capability to implement appropriate technical and organizational measures: to safeguard from it from unauthorized or unlawful use; to ensure confidentiality, privacy and the security of personal data; and to ensure that the data shall not be used for other purposes without express prior written consent from LHSR.

10. Use, Retention, and Disposal

36. If the application is approved, then the applicant will have access to use the data according to the terms of application. The data will be retained by the applicant for the length stipulated on the application form. During the retention period, the applicant is expected to implement appropriate technical and organizational/individual measures to ensure confidentiality, privacy, availability, accuracy and security of Personal Data and safeguard it from unauthorized or unlawful manner and shall not use it for other purposes or in any other manner except with express prior written consent of LHSR.

Upon expiry of the data use contract, the applicant is expected to dispose the data in a professional manner. It should be understood that when a file is deleted, the operating system does not completely remove the file from the disk. Rather, the file deletion removes only the reference to the file from the file system table. The following guidelines should be adhered to:

- a) When disposing electronic data, IT professionals should supervise the process to ensure appropriate cleaning (i.e. sanitization) of the hard drive or other media by performing a data wipe or over-write, or to physically destroy the hard drive or other media before it is passed on to its next owner or destination.
- b) When disposing manual printouts of the Personal Data, applicant should ensure that they are properly shredded. Shredding should be cross-cut, diamond-cut, or confetti-cut shredding, not simply continuous single-strip shredding, which can be reconstructed.
- c) When engaging an external agency to destroy records or electronic media, a background reference check should be conducted accompanied by a signed contract spelling out the terms of the engagement. It is advisable that, applicant should visit the destruction site and require that a certificate of destruction be issued upon completion.

Applicant shall submit an email confirming disposal of the data to LHSR within 15 days after expiry of retention period. LHSR shall monitor the compliance of the data sharing protocols using data protocols monitoring forms set out in the Annex.

11. Costs

37. The LHSR following the policies established by LISGIS will adhere to the Liberia Open Data Initiative (2012) and the recognition of statistics as a public good, microdata shall be made available at no cost to data users. The only possible exception could be in the cases of Remote Job Submission since allocation of a dedicated staff is required to run job against the actual dataset. The decision to apply a cost to these cases will depend on the complexity of the requirement and the number of hours required for the task.

12. Disputes Resolution

38. In case of any dispute between the Requester and LHSR, or between any two parties related to the micro data, the Honorable Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection will give opportunity to all the aggrieved party (ies) to present their case(s). The decision of the Honorable Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection will be final.

13. Legal Framework

39. These data sharing protocols are anchored on Liberia and International Data Sharing Laws.

14. Annexes

Data Dissemination Inter-Institutional Agreement Template

Agreement between Liberia Household Social Registry (LHSR) And **XX** Regarding the Exchange and Use of Micro data

A. This agreement relates to the following micro data sets:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

B. Terms of the agreement:

As the owner of the copyright in the materials listed in section A, or as duly authorized by the owner of the copyright in the materials, the representative of LHSR grants **XX** permission for the datasets listed in section A to be used by [receiving agency] employees, subject to the following conditions:

- i. Microdata (including subsets of the datasets) and copyrighted materials provided by LHSR will not be redistributed or sold to other individuals, institutions, or organizations without LHSR written agreement. Non-copyrighted materials which do not contain microdata (such as data collection questionnaires, manuals, codebooks, or data dictionaries) may be distributed without further authorization. The ownership of all materials provided by LHSR remains with LHSR.
- ii. Data will be used for statistical and scientific research purposes only. They will be employed solely for reporting aggregated information, including modeling, and not for investigating specific individuals or households.
- iii. No attempt will be made to re-identify respondents, and there will be no use of the identity of any person or establishment discovered inadvertently. Any such discovery will be reported immediately to LHSR.
- iv. No attempt will be made to produce links between datasets provided by LHSR or between LHSR data and other datasets that could identify individuals or households.
- v. Any books, articles, conference papers, theses, dissertations, reports or other publications employing data obtained from LHSR will cite the source, in line with the citation requirement provided with the dataset.
- vi. An electronic copy of all publications based on the requested data will be sent to the LHSR.
- vii. The LHSR and the relevant funding agencies bear no responsibility for the data's use or for interpretation or inferences based upon it.
- viii. An electronic copy of all publications based on the requested data will be sent to the LHSR.

- ix. Data will be stored in a secure environment, with adequate access restrictions. The LHSR may at any time request information on the storage and sharing facilities in place.
- x. The [recipient agency] will provide an annual report on uses and users of the listed microdatasets to LHSR, with information on the number of researchers having accessed each dataset, and on the output of this research.
- xi. This access is granted for a period of [provide information on this period, or state that the agreement is open ended].

C. Communications:

The [receiving agency] will appoint a contact person who will act as unique focal person for this agreement. Should the focal person be replaced, **XX** will immediately communicate the name and coordinates of the new contact person to the LHSR. Communications for administrative and procedural purposes may be made by email or letter as follows:

Communications made by **XX** to LHSR will be directed to:

- Name of contact person:
- Title of contact person: **Social Registry Program Manager**
- Address of the LHSR **Capitol Bypass, Monrovia, Liberia**
- LHSR Email:
- LHSR Tel: **0775001000**

Communications made by LHSR to **XX** will be directed to:

- Name of contact person:
- Title of contact person:
- Address of the recipient agency:
- Email:
- Tel:

D. Signatories:

The following signatories have read and agree with the Agreement as presented above:

Representative of the LHSR:

- Name:
- Signature: _____
- Date: _____

Representative of the **XX**

- Name: _____
- Signature: _____
- Date: _____

Request Form Template for Access to A Licensed Dataset for A Specific Research Purpose

Information you provide on this form will not be shared with others, unless a breach of the legal agreement is confirmed, in which case the LHSR may inform LISGIS or any other partner statistical agencies in other countries.

This form is to be e-mailed with a covering letter on the sponsoring agency's letterhead, to:

Title and reference number of the dataset(s) you are requesting (use the exact title, year and reference number as listed in our data collection catalogue):

Terms In this agreement,

1. 'Principal researcher' refers to the researcher who will serve as the main point of contact for all communications involving this agreement. The Principal researcher assumes responsibility for compliance with all terms of this Data Access Agreement. The principal researcher must be an individual with authority to represent the receiving organization in agreements of this sort.
2. 'Other researchers' refers to individuals other than the Principal Researcher, including research assistants, who will have access to the restricted data.
3. 'Receiving organization' refers to the organization/university/establishment that employs the Primary Researcher.

Section A. Primary Researcher

First name _____
Last name _____
Title _____
Organization _____
Position in organization _____
Postal address _____
Telephone (with country code) _____
E-mail _____

Section B. Other Researchers

Provide names, titles and affiliations of any other members of the research team who will have access to the restricted data.

Name (last/first) _____
Position _____
Affiliation _____

Section C. Receiving Organization

Organization's name _____

Type of organization (tick one)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Line ministry/public administration | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-governmental agency (national) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> University | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-governmental agency (international) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Research center | <input type="checkbox"/> Private company |
| <input type="checkbox"/> International organization | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____ |

Organization's website (URL) _____

Postal address _____

Section D. Description of Intended Use of the Data

Please provide a description of your research project (questions, objectives, methods, expected outputs, partners). If information is insufficient, your request may be rejected, or additional information requested. This information may be provided in an appendix to this request.

List of expected output(s) and sharing protocol

Section E. Identification of Data Files and Variables Needed

The LHSR provides detailed metadata on its website, including a description of data files and variables for each dataset. Researchers who do not need access to the whole dataset may indicate which subset of variables or cases are of interest. As this reduces the disclosure risk, providing us with such information may increase the probability that data will be provided.

This request is submitted to access (tick one):

- The whole dataset (all files, all cases).
- A subset of variables and/or cases as described below (note that variables and records identifiers will always be included in subsets).

Section F. Data Access Agreement

The Primary Researcher and the other researchers agree to comply with the following:

1. Access to the restricted data will be limited to the Primary Researcher and other researchers identified in this Agreement.
2. Copies of the restricted data or any data created on the basis of the original data will not be copied or made available to anyone other than those mentioned in this Data Access Agreement, unless formally authorized by the LHSR.
3. The data will be processed only for the stated statistical and research purposes. They will be used solely for reporting aggregated information and not for investigating specific individuals or households. Data will not be used in any way for administrative, proprietary or law-enforcement purposes.
4. The Primary Researcher undertakes that no attempt will be made to identify any individual person or households. If such a unique disclosure occurs inadvertently, no use will be made of the identity of any person or establishment discovered and full details will be reported to the LHSR. The identification will not be revealed to any person not included in the Data Access Agreement.
5. The Primary Researcher will implement security measures to prevent unauthorized access to licensed microdata acquired from the LHSR. The microdata must be destroyed upon the completion of this research, unless LHSR obtains a satisfactory guarantee that the data can be secured, and provides written authorization to the receiving organization to retain them. Destruction of the microdata will be confirmed in writing to the LHSR by the Primary Researcher.
6. Any books, articles, conference papers, theses, dissertations, reports or other publications that employ data obtained from the LHSR will cite the data source in accordance with the citation requirement provided with the dataset.
7. An electronic copy of all reports and publications based on the requested data will be sent to the LHSR.
8. The LHSR and the relevant funding agencies bear no responsibility for use of the data or for interpretation or inferences based upon it.
9. This agreement comes into force on the date approval is given for access to the restricted dataset and remains in force until the end date of the project or earlier if the project is completed ahead of time.
10. If there are any changes to the project specification, security arrangements, personnel or organization detailed in this application form, it is the Primary Researcher's responsibility to seek LHSR agreement to such changes. Where there is a change to the employer organization of the Primary Researcher this will involve a fresh application and termination of the original project.

11. Breaches of the agreement will be taken seriously and LHSR will instigate action against those responsible for the lapse, if either willful or accidental. Failure to comply with LHSR directions will be deemed a major breach of the agreement and may involve recourse to legal proceedings. The LHSR will maintain and share with partner data archives a register of those individuals and organizations responsible for breaching the terms of the Data Access Agreement and will impose sanctions on release of future data to these parties.

Signatories

The Principal researcher or an authorized representative of the receiving organization has read and agree with the Data Access Agreement as presented in section F above:

-Name _____
-Signature _____
-Date _____

Request reviewed by _____ on [date]: _____
LHSR Program Manager

Decision by LSSN:

- Approved
- Deny [reason] _____
- More information needed: _____

_____ Date: _____
LSSN National Coordinator

Template Form for Access to Data in the LHSR Data Enclave

Information you provide on this form will not be shared with others, unless a breach of the legal agreement is confirmed, in which case the LHSR may inform LISGIS or any other partner statistical agencies in other countries.

This form is to be e-mailed with a covering letter on the sponsoring agency's letterhead, to: [e-mail address]

Title and reference number of the dataset(s) you are requesting (use the exact title, year and reference number as listed in our data collection catalogue):

Terms In this agreement,

1. "Primary Data Investigator" refers to the investigator who will serve as the main point of contact for all communications involving this agreement. The Primary Data Investigator assumes responsibility for compliance with all terms of this Data Access Agreement. The principal researcher must be an individual with authority to represent the receiving organization in agreements of this sort.
2. "Other investigators" refers to individuals other than the Primary Data Investigator, including research assistants, who will have access to the restricted data.
3. "Receiving organization" refers to the organization/university/establishment that employs the Primary Data Investigator.
4. "Representative of the receiving organization" refers to an individual with authority to represent the receiving organization in agreements of this sort.

Section A. Primary Data Investigator

First name _____
Last name _____
Title _____
Organization _____
Position in organization _____
Postal address _____
Telephone (with country code) _____
E-mail _____

Section B. Other Investigators

Provide names, titles and affiliations of any other members of the research team who will have access to the restricted data.

Name (last/first) _____

Position _____

Affiliation _____

A current resume or curriculum vitae for each person who will participate in the research must be provided with this request. Resumes or CVs must specify nationality.

Section C. Receiving Organization

Organization's name _____

Type of organization (tick one)

Line ministry/public administration

Non-governmental agency (national)

University

Non-governmental agency (international)

- Research center
- Private company
- International organization
- Other (specify) _____

Organization's website (URL) _____

Postal address _____

Section C. Receiving Organization

Organization's name _____

Type of organization (tick one)

- Line ministry/public administration
- Non-governmental agency (national)
- University
- Non-governmental agency (international)
- Research center
- Private company
- International organization
- Other (specify) _____

Organization's website (URL) _____

Postal address _____

Section D. Representative of the Receiving Organization

First name _____

Last name _____

Title _____

Organization _____

Position in organization _____

Postal address _____

Telephone (with country code) _____

E-mail _____

Section E. Description of intended use of the data

Please provide a description of your research project (questions, objectives, methods, expected outputs, partners). Explain why publicly available datasets are not sufficient for your purposes.

If information is insufficient, your request may be rejected, or additional information required. This information may be provided in an attached appendix to this request.

List of expected output(s) and sharing protocol:

- Will you need to merge the dataset with other data? YES NO

- If YES specify all other datasets needing to be merged.

Section F. Identification of Data Files and Variables Needed

The LHSR provides detailed metadata on its website, including a description of data files and variables for each dataset. Researchers are requested to indicate which subset of variables or cases they are interested in, to allow the LHSR to prepare the data files.

This request is submitted to access:

- The whole dataset (all files, all cases)

A subset of variables and/or cases as described below (note that variables and records identifiers will always be included in sub-sets)

Section G. Software Requirements

The following software will be used by the researchers:

- CPro
- SAS
- SPSS
- Stata
- Other software (specify): _____

Notes:

- LHSR regularly upgrades its software. Contact us if you need more information on the version of each application available.
- Researchers who need software not provided as a standard by LHSR will have to provide LHSR with a valid license of the application, which will be installed by LHSR staff for the duration of the research work (the license will remain the property of the researcher).
- Please contact LHSR prior to finalizing this request to confirm technical feasibility.

Section H. Data Access Agreement

If approved, following agreement will be signed:

The Primary Data Investigator, the Other Investigators, and the Representative of the Receiving Organization agree to comply with the following:

1. Access to the confidential data will be limited to the Primary Data Investigator and Other Investigators listed in the application form, and who will sign the Affidavit of Confidentiality.
2. The data will only be processed for the stated statistical purpose. They will be used solely for reporting aggregated information and not for investigation of specific individuals or households. Data will not be used in any way for any administrative, proprietary or law enforcement purposes.
3. The Primary Data Investigator undertakes that no attempt will be made to identify any individual person or households. If such a unique disclosure is made inadvertently, no use will be made of the identity of any person or establishment discovered and full details will be reported to the LHSR. The identification will not be revealed to any other person not included in the Data Access Agreement.
4. Any books, articles, conference papers, theses, dissertations, reports, or other publications that employ data obtained from the LHSR will cite the source of data in accordance with the citation requirement provided with the dataset.
5. An electronic copy of all reports and publications based on the requested data will be sent to the LHSR.
6. The original collector of the data, the LHSR, and the relevant funding agencies bear no responsibility for use of the data or for interpretation or inferences based upon such uses.
7. Breaches of the agreement will be treated seriously and the LHSR will take action against those responsible for the lapse if either willful or accidental. Failure to comply with the directions of the LHSR will be deemed a major breach of the agreement and may involve recourse to legal proceedings. The LHSR will maintain and share with partner data archives a register of those individuals and organizations responsible for breaching the terms of the Data Access Agreement and will impose sanctions on release of future data to these parties.
8. The LHSR reserves the right to terminate any project at any time it deems an investigator's actions will compromise confidentiality or ethical standards of behavior in a research environment.
9. No printouts, electronic files, documents, written notes or media will be removed from the LHSR until scanned for disclosure risk by LHSR staff.

10. The Primary Data Investigator and other investigators may be barred from any future use of the LHSR upon review and determination by the Coordinator of the LHSR that this is necessary to protect the integrity and confidentiality of the LHSR.

Signatories

The following signatories have read and agree with the Data Access Agreement as presented in section H above:

The Principal Data Investigator Name _____
Signature _____
Date _____

Representative of the Receiving Organization

Name _____
Signature _____
Date _____

LHSR expects that all researchers will adhere to established standards and principles for carrying out statistical research and analyses. Researchers must conduct only those analyses which have received approval. Failure to comply will result in cancellation of the research activity and potential disbarment from future research activities in _____ the _____ LHSR.

Template of LHSR Data Enclave Access Protocol

A. Objectives

The LHSR Data Enclave was established to allow researchers with certain qualifications, and under strict supervision, to access confidential statistical microdata files. LHSR provides a mechanism whereby researchers can access detailed data files securely, without jeopardizing respondents' confidentiality.

B. Location

The LHSR Data Enclave is located at the LHSR headquarter.

Phone Numbers:

+231-775-0010000

+231-880-244141

Email:

info@LHSR.gov.lr

Postal Address:

Liberia Household Social Registry

P. O. Box MBO 186,

Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection, Monrovia - Liberia

C. LHSR Operations

Researchers can access the data on-site and be provided with computer equipment, software, office space and LHSR staff supervision.

D. Data

- LHSR staff constructs the necessary data files before the guest researcher arrives, and ensures no restricted data leave the facility.
- Researchers proposing multiple analyses employing multiple datasets have access to only one dataset at a time. Under no circumstance are researchers permitted an opportunity to merge datasets on their own.
- LHSR allows researchers to supply their own anonymous data to link to LHSR datasets and create merged datasets for storage at LHSR. The researcher-supplied data may consist of proprietary data collected and 'owned' by the researcher, or other publicly-available data legally obtained by the researcher. Researchers MUST provide LHSR staff with complete documentation of any data proposed for merger with LHSR data. Researchers expecting to use merged files are responsible for interacting with LHSR staff to ensure their data can be merged with LHSR data. LHSR accepts user data files in SAS, SPSS or Stata format.
- LHSR periodically creates and maintains back-up copies of all computer files. Back-up files are stored securely and accessible by LHSR staff only, although they may be made available to researchers needing to return for additional analyses. These back-up files contain user-supplied data as well as merged files and will be destroyed at the written request of the user.

E. Computer Equipment.

- LHSR has 2 user work-stations and a black-and-white laser printer in a secure room. LHSR computers are not linked to the Internet and are configured so that removable media such as CD-ROM or DVD writers, floppy disks or USB ports are inaccessible to users.
- LHSR work-stations consist of [Pentium X XXX MHz] computers running [Windows NT / other?].

F. Software

- CPro, EPI-Info, SAS, SPS and Stata are installed in the workstations in addition to MS-Office applications. Additional programming/analytical languages can be supplied as needed. For more information on the software versions available at LHSR, please contact us.
- Researchers must have sufficient expertise to conduct their own analyses with one of the software applications provided. LHSR does not provide technical support for this.

G. Office Space

- Researchers must work under the supervision of LHSR staff and only during normal working hours (Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.).
- Admittance to LHSR is limited to researchers whose names are included in the research proposal. They are required to show photo-identification before admittance.
- A maximum of 2 collaborating researchers can sit at a computer station.
- Scheduling time at LHSR is on a first-come, first-served basis. LHSR Staff

H. Supervision (For Disclosure Review)

- External researchers are not allowed to bring documents, manuals, books, etc, that may enable them to identify and disclose confidential information accessed at LHSR. Neither are they allowed to bring cell phones, pagers or other devices that would enable them to communicate outside LHSR.
- Researchers may not save output, files or programs to transportable electronic media. LHSR staff can copy output or programs to transportable media if requested.
- Researchers may take the results of their analyses off-site only after a disclosure review by LHSR staff. Disclosure reviews consists of looking for tabular cells less than five, tables with geographical variables in any dimension, models with geographical variables (or variables tantamount to geographical variables) as outcome variables, or case listings.
- All logs must be printed or electronically archived and are kept by LHSR, which will retain only programs and procedures run by external researchers. The logs will not include results of their own research.
- All computer output generated by statistical programs and all handwritten notes based on this are subject to disclosure review by LHSR staff before removal from LHSR. Output is restricted to summary tables. In no case may any table contain cells with fewer than five observations. If found, these small cells are suppressed, generally by obliterating them. To ensure that small cells cannot be calculated from other cells in the same row or column, staff make illegible the totals for the rows and columns corresponding to the small cell. Once the disclosure review is completed, researchers receive a photocopy of the final tabulations. LHSR staff use best practice in determining whether tabular data are identifiable and are conservative in their decisions. LHSR decisions are final and not subject to negotiation by researchers.

I. Submission of Research Proposals

Researchers must submit proposals using the Form for Access to Data in The LHSR Data Enclave. Prospective researchers are encouraged to check with LHSR staff before writing their proposals to ensure the data of interest to them is available.

Researchers should develop their proposals in a way that helps LHSR staff create the analytical files required for the project. Proposals should be explicit about the variables needed and any case selection required. Only data items needed for the proposed analyses will be included in the analytical data file and proposals should say why the requested data are needed. Overly large and complex projects or those poorly defined require extensive communication between LHSR staff and the proposers. This can make the process move slowly. Work to prepare data files can be accomplished most expeditiously if large, complex projects are subdivided into manageable parts and requested data are clearly defined.

Researchers wishing to link LHSR data with external data should provide the latter to LHSR staff before coming to LHSR. Upon receipt, the research proposal is evaluated for that purpose. The following criteria apply to a proposal review:

- Scientific and technical feasibility of the project.
- Availability of LHSR resources.
- Risk of disclosure of restricted information.

Researchers should note that approval of their application does not constitute endorsement by LHSR of the substantive, methodological, theoretical or policy relevance or merit of the proposed research. LHSR approval is only a judgement that the research described in the application is not illegal use of the requested data file, and that it is highly probable the project can be completed successfully at LHSR.

Template Form for Affidavit of Confidentiality

This affidavit of confidentiality² must be signed by any investigator listed in the application forms.

I agree:

- 1) To make no copies of any files or portions of files to which I am granted access except those authorized by LHSR staff. No confidential data or information viewed or otherwise obtained while I am a researcher in LHSR will be removed from LHSR.
- 2) To return to LHSR staff all LHSR restricted material with which I may be provided during the conduct of my research at LHSR, and other material as requested.
- 3) Not to use any technique in an attempt to learn the identity of any person, establishment or sampling unit not identified in public-use data files.
- 4) To keep in strictest confidence identification of any establishment or individual that may be inadvertently revealed in any documents, discussion, or analysis. Such inadvertent identification revealed in my analysis will be immediately brought to the attention of LHSR staff.
- 5) Not to remove any print-outs, electronic files, documents, or media until they have been scanned for disclosure risk by LHSR staff. I understand that LHSR will perform a disclosure review and give me approval before I remove any data from LHSR, whether they be in electronic or paper form.
- 6) Not to remove from LHSR any written notes pertaining to the identification of any establishment, individual or geographical area that may be revealed in the conduct of my research at LHSR.
- 7) To comport myself in a manner consistent with the principles and standards appropriate to a scientific research establishment.

I understand that deliberate violation of any of these conditions may result in cancellation of the data access agreement. I further agree that in such event I may be barred from any future use of LHSR following a review and determination by the Coordinator of LHSR that finds such action is necessary to protect the integrity and confidentiality of LHSR.

Data Investigator Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Witness's Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

²This affidavit of confidentiality is an adapted version of the 2008 version of the Agreement Regarding Conditions of Access to Confidential Data in the Research Data Center of the US National Center for Health Statistics

Data Request Cover Letter

[Your Name/Organization]
[P.O. Box],
[Physical Address],
[City, Zip Code],

[insert date]]

The Minister

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Data Request

Based on the Data Dissemination Protocol set out on LHSR, «applicant/organization» would like to request for data on «beneficiaries of programme».

We intend to use the information for the following purposes

«aa»

«bb»

«cc»

We have dully completed the application form enclosed. We look forward to your favorable feedback.

Yours Faithfully,

[YourName]

Enclosed (Data Request and Confidentiality Form)