



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

OPEN DATA LICENSING FOR STATISTICAL DATABASES

Policy

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF STATISTICIAN (OCS)

JANUARY 2020

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PREAMBLE

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations system with a mandate to: eradicate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition; to eliminate poverty; to promote progress in the form of economic and social development; and to foster the sustainable management and utilization of natural resources for the benefit of present and future generations.

Article 1 of FAO's constitution specifies that, "The Organization shall collect, analyze, interpret, and disseminate information related to nutrition, food and agriculture." In this regard, FAO collects national level data from member countries, which it then standardizes and disseminates through corporate statistical databases. Together these databases represent the most extensive and reliable evidence base on food and agriculture in the world.

OPEN DATA LICENSING RATIONALE AND DEFINITIONS

The context of "Open data" is associated with a set of principles whose aim is to maximize the accessibility of data¹ and, therefore their use. Removing barriers to data access increases the opportunity for researchers, policy makers and other stakeholders to derive actionable insights, which can be translated into evidence-based decision-making and improved development outcomes.

Data licensing defines the legal terms under which data can be disseminated, used and shared. The absence of an internationally understood and interoperable data license represents a significant barrier for data access and undermines the value of statistical databases for member countries.

¹ For more details, see the International Open Data Charter (<https://opendatacharter.net/principles/>)

What is defined as **Open Data Licensing** in the context of this policy is the conditions under which FAO applies the open data principles to its data terms of use. FAO considers Open Data Licensing to be an important practical application of its commitment to the collection, synthesis, packaging and distribution of FAO statistical data to the world at large, and particularly the populations of those countries where such knowledge may not be readily accessible. This policy advocates for the application of a suitable open data license to be applied to all statistical data disseminated through corporate databases.

This policy complies with and extends the FAO Terms and Conditions, FAO Open Access policy, the FAO Corporate Communication Policy; the FAO Corporate Publishing Policy; the Publishing at FAO – Strategy and Guidance document and the FAO Logo Policy and Guidelines; and FAO Statistical Standard on Use of External Data sources.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. _____ SCOPE AND APPLICATION

In accordance with Article 1, FAO collects from member countries statistical data on various domains of agricultural statistics including production, trade, inputs, agricultural emissions, land use, prices, food security, forestry, and many others. It then processes these data to ensure accuracy, compliance to sound statistical standards, and international comparability. Finally, national-level aggregated indicators are disseminated through databases accessible on FAO's corporate website free of charge in machine readable formats.

The Organization also collects and/or redistributes publically available data in compliance with national and institutional policies governing statistical data. Microdata contained in any database are not included in the scope of this policy.

Annex 1 provides the list of FAO corporate databases covered by this policy.

2. _____ CREATIVE COMMONS LICENSING

Starting from November 30th, 2019, the Creative Commons 3.0 Intergovernmental Organization (IGO) license will be applied to all corporate databases included in Annex 1 available on www.FAO.org.

The default license that will apply to these corporate databases is: Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 IGO (CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO).

No Creative Commons license will apply to FAO databases published before November 30th, 2019 unless the CC logo shown in Annex 2 is present in the database's metadata, and/or the database is specifically listed in the Terms of Use for Datasets.

3. _____ THIRD PARTY EXCEPTIONS

In some cases, FAO includes data in corporate databases that are provided by third party which may not be redistributed or reused without the consent of the original data provider, or may be subject to terms and conditions which are different than FAO's. For cases in which this is applicable, it will be noted in the metadata of the database.

4. _____ RESPONSIBILITIES

FAO Departments or Decentralized Offices responsible for statistical databases covered under this policy are responsible for:

- Ensuring that statistical data are collected, processed and disseminated in compliance with national and institutional policies governing statistical data.
- Ensuring accurate and adequate metadata is provided for all corporate statistical databases specifically noting when data are provided by a third-party.

FAO Office of the Chief Statistician (OCS) is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all non-restricted FAO statistical data are disseminated through corporate database in compliance with this policy, and ensure freedom of access to all, and the preservation of FAO institutional memory for posterity.
- Monitor the creation and publication of new statistical databases, and provide assistance for adopting this policy.
- Lead the review of this policy, and corresponding annexes as needed.

FAO Office for Corporate Communication (OCC) is responsible for:

- Monitoring commercial use requests sent to digital@fao.org.

All parties reusing FAO data must:

- Ensure that they have obtained permission to reuse any third-party, non-FAO data that may appear in FAO corporate databases.

ANNEXES

1. LIST OF FAO DATABASES IN SCOPE FOR THE OPEN DATA LICENSING

Statistical Databases	Responsible FAO technical unit/division
Agricultural Market Information Systems (AMIS) – Market Database	AMIS Secretariat (hosted in EST) AMIS-Secretariat@fao.org
Global Information System on Water and Agriculture (AQUASTAT)	Land and Water Division (CBL) aquastat@fao.org
FAOSTAT	Statistics Division (ESS) faostat@fao.org
Fisheries and Aquaculture (FISHSTAT)	Statistics and Information unit, Fisheries and Aquaculture (FI) Department marc.taconet@fao.org
Gender and land rights database (GLRD)	Social Policies and Rural Institutions Division (ESP) Gender-And-Land@fao.org
Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS) – Food Price Monitoring and Analysis Tool (FPMA)	Trade and Markets Division (EST) giews1@fao.org
Global Individual Food Consumption (FAO/WHO GIFT) – Indicators only, not microdata	Nutrition and Food Systems Division (ESN) fao-who-gift@fao.org
SDG Data Portal	Office of Chief Statistician (OCS) SDG-indicators@fao.org

2. TEXT AND LOGO TO BE ADDED IN METADATA OF CORPORATE DATABASES



This work is made available under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 IGO license (CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO; <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/igo>). In addition to this license, some database specific terms of use are listed: [Terms of Use of Datasets](#).

OCC CONTACTS

Commercial use requests

Digital@fao.org

OCS CONTACTS

General information and support

Statistics-Requests@fao.org



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