

# KonsortSWD

## Consortium for the Social, Behavioural, Educational, and Economic Sciences

The disciplines represented by KonsortSWD deal with **socially relevant issues**. To address these issues, research communities require **comprehensive access to innovative data**. Researchers in the social, behavioural, educational, and economic sciences use **diverse types of data**, which are often highly sensitive. There is **high potential for making these data FAIR**.

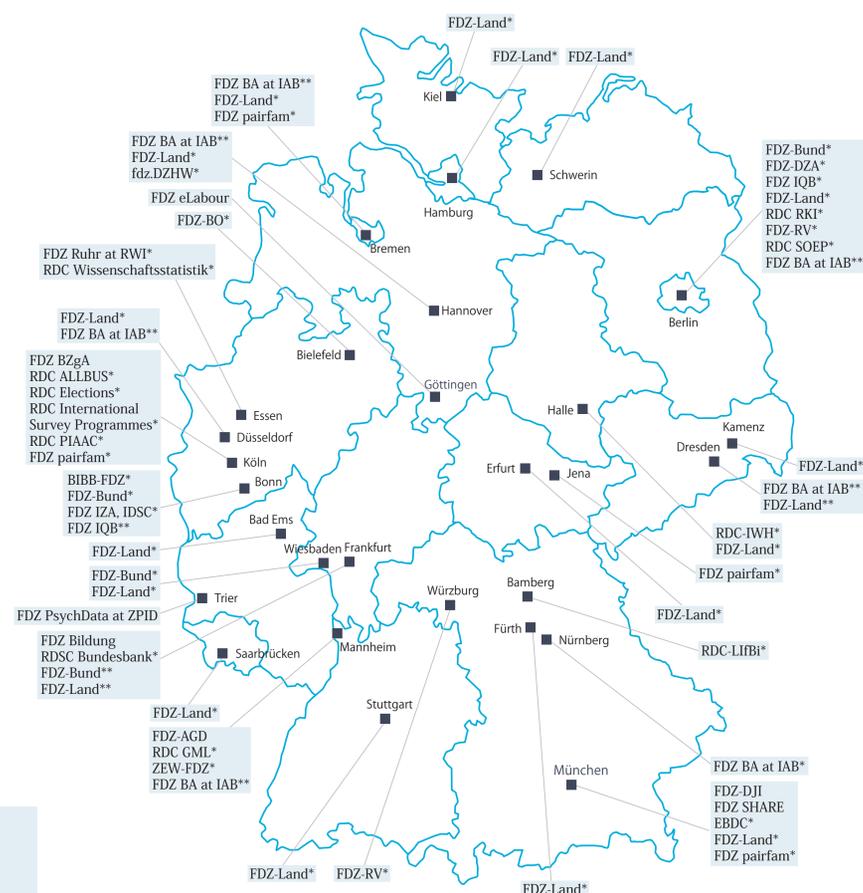
KonsortSWD is designed to **meet the needs of a significant share of German academia**: in sum, about **37 % of students**<sup>1</sup> and about **29 % of professors**<sup>2</sup> in German academia (as of 2017) study and work in disciplines relating to law, economics, and the social sciences. Furthermore, in 2016, **19 % of doctoral candidates**<sup>3</sup> came from these fields. These numbers show that KonsortSWD is highly relevant for academia.

KonsortSWD was initiated by the German Data Forum (RatSWD). Established in 2004, the RatSWD is an **independent council that links data producers and data-using scientific communities**. It advises the German federal government and the federal states (Länder) in matters concerning the research data infrastructure for the empirical social, educational, behavioural, and economic sciences.

The RatSWD has 16 members: **eight elected representatives** of the social, educational, behavioural, and economic sciences and **eight appointed representatives** of Germany's most important data producers. The RatSWD offers a forum for **dialogue between researchers and data producers**, who jointly issue recommendations and position papers.

The RatSWD furthers the development of a research infrastructure that provides researchers with **flexible and secure access to a broad range of data**. As of yet, the RatSWD has accredited **32 research data centres (RDCs)** and fosters their interaction and collaboration.

## Research data centres provide flexible and secure access to a broad range of data across Germany



Most RDCs keep their German acronym FDZ  
\* RDCs with guest researcher workstations | \*\* External RDC guest researcher workstation  
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## Accredited RDCs in 2017: Key Figures



Source: Activities Report 2017 | © RatSWD 2019

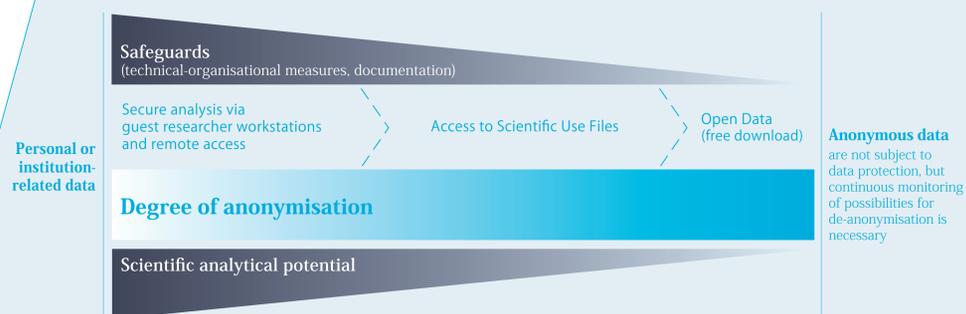
## Description of data types

Subject	Data types	Main sharing restrictions
Individuals	Process-generated administrative data, official statistics (e.g., in context of social insurances and registers)	Privacy
	(longitudinal) Survey data, experimental, behavioural data (e.g., geotracking, sensor, web, social media)	Privacy, ethical
	Qualitative interviews, observations, audio, and video records	Privacy, ethical
Groups of individuals	Audio and video records	Copyright
Firms / organisations	Business data (e.g., earnings, patents), transaction data (e.g., stocks)	Legal, proprietary data, copyright, confidentiality
	Texts (e.g., stemming from decision-making processes, parliamentary protocols), web, social media, media reports	Legal, proprietary data, copyright, confidentiality
Small-scale regional data	Crime, regional tax revenue, aggregated survey data, geodata (aggregated in e.g., postal codes, cities, states)	Sometimes legal
Nations	National statistics, aggregated survey data, texts (e.g., stemming from political decision-making processes, parliamentary protocols), media reports	Copyright, confidentiality

## Anonymisation and the analytical potential of data

In research, data protection and the preservation of the data's analytical potential need to be balanced. **As a rule, the more anonymised data is, the lower is its analysis potential for research.** The RDCs therefore pursue a variety of approaches regarding the degree of data anonymisation and data access.

**Depending on the sensitivity of the data, the RDCs provide a wide range of access paths to their datasets** (see figure below). For weakly anonymised data, many RDCs provide guest researcher workstations for on-site data access. Several RDCs also offer (controlled) remote access. For less sensitive but not completely anonymous data, a large majority of RDCs facilitate off-site use through scientific use files. Only completely anonymised data are available for free download.



Source: Activities Report 2017 | © RatSWD 2019

## Resulting needs are

- Uniform, easy **access to research data**, based on a cross-disciplinary consensus about standards for RDCs,
- Transparent and user-friendly** implementation of legal restrictions regarding **data use**,
- Accepted, maintained, and well-known **repositories for all relevant fields** of research,
- Increased **linkability of existing data** through technical means (unique identifiers and linked open data), concepts for data protection, and harmonisation of key concepts,
- Procedures for **access to complex data types** (audio, video, texts, and experimental data) that ensure compatibility of metadata and linkability,
- Enhanced **open science** by establishing and adapting a platform and software-independent open format for data exchange and metadata,
- Interoperable concepts**, i.e., operationalisations and metadata based on international and interdisciplinary standards, and
- Continuous **(political) lobbying for data access** and data sharing for research purposes.

## KonsortSWD follows a:

- 1) User-centric logic:** It will establish close connections to university libraries and other specialised scientific information services (DFG-funded "Fachinformationsdienste").
- 2) Research-driven logic:** Accredited and monitored by the RatSWD, existing RDCs represent an increasing breadth of data types. They are used by different disciplines – within the social, behavioural, educational, and economic sciences and beyond. Drawing on this existing network, KonsortSWD will deepen and expand its network to connect with adjacent disciplines. Following the demands of the research data landscape, the RatSWD will maintain its networking activities with administration and policy.
- 3) Data type logic:** Within NFDI, consortia from the humanities and life sciences as well as from geosciences share similar methodological approaches and research interests. Therefore, these consortia are of special interest to KonsortSWD. Creating synergies through shared services will be of high importance.

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Present at NFDI Conference:

Prof. Dr. Stefan Liebig (DIW Berlin), Prof. Regina T. Riphahn, Ph.D. (FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg, Chair RatSWD), Prof. Dr. Marc Rittberger (DIPF), Prof. Dr. Christof Wolf (GESIS)

1 [https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/BildungForschungKultur/Hochschulen/StudierendeHochschulenEndg2110410187004.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/BildungForschungKultur/Hochschulen/StudierendeHochschulenEndg2110410187004.pdf?__blob=publicationFile), p. 33  
2 [https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/BildungForschungKultur/Hochschulen/PersonalHochschulen2110440177004.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/BildungForschungKultur/Hochschulen/PersonalHochschulen2110440177004.pdf?__blob=publicationFile), p. 48  
3 [https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/WirtschaftStatistik/2017/04/PromovierendeDeutschland\\_042017.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/WirtschaftStatistik/2017/04/PromovierendeDeutschland_042017.pdf?__blob=publicationFile), p. 110