

GUIDELINES ON DATA ACCESS AND SHARING

APHRC premises its data access and sharing practices on the principle that data is a public good and should be made available to all authorized users in a timely manner and in a user-friendly format. Equally, any individual or organization using or seeking to access APHRC data will be required to abide by strict conditions as set out below.

This component of the research policy outlines the conditions under which APHRC data should be used, the responsibilities users must commit to, and procedures for accessing APHRC data. PLs are responsible for approving requests to use APHRC data generated by projects under their Programs. For external data request, final approval should be sought from the DR office. SSU is responsible for processing all external data requests at the Center upon approval. To promote synergy and cross program collaboration, data sharing is encouraged with approval from respective program leaders.

Data users are expected to respect the confidentiality and privacy of individuals whose records they access; to observe any restrictions that apply to sensitive data; and to abide by applicable laws, policies, procedures and guidelines with respect to access, use, sharing or disclosure of information. The unauthorized storage, disclosure or distribution of APHRC data in any medium or use of any such data for one's own personal gain is strictly prohibited and considered a gross misconduct.

Guidelines for Data Access for External Users

Authorization for external users (non-APHRC staff) to use APHRC data will be granted by the DR, in consultation with the concerned PI and PL. While decisions to grant authorization will be made on a case by case basis, the following general guidelines will apply in considering such applications:

Data Access to Collaborative Partners

In order to expand the scope and impact of its research, APHRC encourages the formation of collaborative partnerships with other scholars or institutions. Modalities for data sharing and publication among members of a partnership should be established in a memorandum of understanding (MoU) before submission of research applications to donors or before implementation of research projects to avoid misunderstandings later. The following guidelines should govern the formation of research MoUs regarding data access and related issues.

1. Agreement on access to data will apply only to the data collected through the joint project. If there is need to extend access to other related data collected by the Center, an agreement on this should be captured in the same or a separate MoU.
2. Access to data will be limited to partners that are mentioned in the proposal. External partners should not share/use the data with non-authorized persons. Unless specifically negotiated and authorized, external partners may not use APHRC data without involvement of APHRC staff as co-authors on scientific and other publications written using the data.

3. All partners will fill out a Data Access Form (see Annex I) and commit to abide by the guidelines for data use specified on the form. External users “co-own” data generated by the joint projects and the primary purpose for filling the form is to keep track of who is using which data and for which purpose.
4. Access to APHRC data for external collaborators will remain valid for two years after the end of the project to allow further analysis of data for scientific publication. This period may be extended if there is clearly defined outstanding work.

Data Access to Other External Users

1. The Center may grant permission for use of APHRC data to individuals or institutions with whom it may not have an MoU or a collaborative arrangement. These may include government departments, UN Agencies, or other strategic partners. In general, the Center will generate tables and indicators requested by these institutions and may charge them for data abstraction costs if necessary. In cases where the partners request for raw data, they will be required to fill a formal data request form and the DR will consider the request on a case-by-case basis.
2. APHRC data (particularly cross-sectional data)¹ may be released to the public domain two years after the release of analytical data sets. The 24 month embargo is meant to enable investigators and other staff working on the project to finalize defined papers addressing core study objectives and allow other interested APHRC staff to use the data.
3. All external users of data that have been released to the public domain should apply for access to the data using the data request form and abide by the guidelines and all restrictions outlined on the form. No requirement for involvement of APHRC staff shall be placed on the use of such data. However, all ensuing publications must acknowledge APHRC as the source of the data, and copies of the publication must be sent to the PEC division’s director at APHRC.

Data Access by Graduate Students

As part of its capacity building program, the Center encourages graduate students to use its data (particularly data that has been made publicly available) for writing their theses and dissertations.

Students seeking to use APHRC data that are not yet in the public domain may be given permission to use such data if either of the following is fulfilled:

1. They are supervised by collaborative partners and the data access to the students is agreed upon in the MOU guiding the partnership
2. The student is a former employee of APHRC

The Center may request/demand that one of its staff members be appointed to serve on the student’s dissertation committee in instances in which the student requires access to non-publicly available APHRC data sets.

¹ As member of the INDEPTH network, APHRC adheres to the network’s data access and sharing policy for sharing longitudinal data with other users (http://www.indepth-network.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1403&Itemid=3).

If a student fulfills either of the two conditions above, APHRC expects him/her to carry out his/her preliminary and other data analyses at the Center. During this time, the student will function as a Research Intern and will be expected to contribute to other aspects of research at the Center, including data processing, analysis or management of fieldwork.

Students who have authorized access to APHRC data are bound by the guidelines and restrictions specified in the data access form. For instance, the student shall not use the data for any other purpose other than the dissertation (unless specifically authorized to do so) and shall not share the data with any other party, including their professors (without written permission from APHRC). Students who intend to publish their work after completing their dissertation should seek special permission from APHRC.

APHRC may provide a dataset for training purposes to a graduate training program or for technical training workshops. Use of such data beyond the class work will be guided and governed by an MoU to be signed between APHRC and the training institution.