

GLEN Secure Data Center

Guide for Visiting Researchers

This guide describes the GLEN Secure Data Center (GLEN SDC) and the process for using it. It is provided for information only. The binding provisions are set out in the data use agreement.

Contact: fdz-glen@projects.rptu.de

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Purpose

The GLEN SDC is an on-site secure environment at RPTU Kaiserslautern-Landau. It provides two forms of access that are not available through the GLEN Scientific Use File (SUF):

- the linkage of GLEN survey data with geodata at the individual level, and
- the analysis of the verbatim open-ended answers from the GLEN questionnaires.

Access requirements

Access to the GLEN SUF and a data-use-agreement with GESIS is a precondition. Applicants confirm by signature that this agreement has been signed and that their intended use in the GLEN SDC is compatible with the terms agreed with GESIS.

The GLEN SDC and the guest researcher sign a data use agreement for each user account separately. Accounts are personal and cannot be shared.

No particular qualification is required. Undergraduate students and others who are not employed at a research institution require the co-signature of their academic supervisor (PhD-Students with a grant / stipend can sign an agreement of their own, but a student job does not account as employment).

Use of the GLEN SDC is free of charge. Travel and accommodation are not covered by GLEN. We can however provide a university discount code for some local hotels.

Application

Please apply by email to fdz-glen@projects.rptu.de. No particular form is required. The email should state:

- a brief description of the research project,
- if geodata are to be linked: the geodata to be submitted, including source and license, and the intended form of linkage, either at administrative or other standardized units (the standard procedure) or on the basis of calculations defined by the user,
- the software and the packages or libraries required,
- preferred visit dates and the expected duration of the stay.

Applications are checked formally. There is no assessment of academic merit. This normally takes about two weeks. Applicants then receive the data use agreement for signature.

The time required to prepare the linkage of the submitted geodata with the GLEN SUF is determined case by case. The time is communicated to the applicant once the documents have been received. It depends on the scope and the complexity of the linkage.

Once the agreement has been concluded and the preparation completed, the personal account is set up and the visit date confirmed.

Data and code

Files cannot be transferred to the workstations by users. Only geodata and code can be submitted to the GLEN SDC staff. They are handed over to GLEN SDC in advance, checked, and then made available in the personal account. Portable storage media are not permitted in the rooms.

We only use our local copy of the GLEN SUF for linkage. Your own copy of the SUF cannot be submitted. If preparation steps need to be carried out in advance (e.g., recoding of variables), please submit the **clean, minimal** code to the GLEN SDC staff so that they can be reproduced on site.

GLEN SDC carries out the linkage and provides the merged SUF with the resulting indicators in the account. When merging data, we follow the merge specifications submitted by the user without checking whether it makes sense substantively. Responsibility for the substantive correctness of the specifications and the resulting indicators rests with the user.

Merge specifications need to state which survey or wave the linkage refers to and the vintage of the geodata submitted. The GLEN Data Manual specifies which place-of-residence information underlies each survey.

Indicators and any spatial structure information required for the analysis need to be specified before the visit. Subsequent changes require further processing time and are generally not possible during a visit.

Compliance with the license terms of the geodata is the responsibility of the user.

Visits

The GLEN SDC is located at Erwin-Schrödinger-Straße 57, 67663 Kaiserslautern.

Two guest workstations are available. Appointments are allocated according to availability. Dates and expected duration are agreed in advance and confirmed by GLEN SDC. Visits take place during agreed hours and in the presence of GLEN SDC staff. There is no maximum length of stay.

Work environment

Electronic devices, including laptops, phones, portable storage and cameras, are not permitted in the rooms. Lockers are available on-site.

The workstations have no internet access. Places with internet access are available elsewhere on campus.

R, RStudio, Python, Stata and QGIS are available. A local package mirror is maintained for R. Required packages and libraries should be announced in advance, as installing additional packages may take time and is not always possible during a visit as workstations and servers are not connected to the internet.

Access credentials are personal. Workstations must be locked when left unattended.

GLEN SDC staff may view users' analyses and working materials for purposes of advice, operation and data protection. Selected staff of the university computing center hold administrative access to the environment. All persons concerned are bound by confidentiality.

Outputs

Nothing may be taken out of the rooms directly. Outputs include software output, tables, figures, maps, code and text written by users, as well as handwritten notes.

Handwritten notes are handed over before leaving the rooms and go through the same review as any other output.

Selected output review criteria:

- Presentations or analyses of individual cases will not be released, even where no direct personal identifiers are present. Summary presentations customary in academic publications and conference presentations are acceptable.
- Dot maps and other cartographic representations that allow individual cases or municipalities to be located will not be released.
- Coordinates, distance measures, neighborhood measures and comparable information from which the location of a case could be reconstructed will not be released.
- Tables and cross-tabulations with regional characteristics that pose the risk of de-anonymization.
- Verbatim open-ended responses and extracts from them will not be released. Categorized or aggregated analyses of these responses are acceptable.

The GLEN SDC decides on a case-by-case basis, taking into account both the output itself and outputs already released to the same user. Where an output cannot be released as submitted, the GLEN SDC may release it in part or make release conditional on adjustments. Users are informed of the reason. Adjustments that require recalculation must be made by users themselves during a further visit. These criteria may be revised.

Outputs are requested before the end of the visit. Submit the code that produces them alongside. Requested outputs must be reproducible from the code submitted. Results edited by hand or not traceable to the code cannot be released.

Outputs are not handed over during the visit. They are reviewed after the visit and sent by email once released. Review normally takes up to 10 working days from submission and longer for large or complex outputs. Plan the visit on the assumption that results arrive some time afterwards.

Where an output cannot be released as submitted, GLEN SDC states the reason. Adjustments requiring recalculation are made by users themselves during a further visit.

Accounts

Accounts are limited in duration and are extended on request while the agreement is in force. On expiry, the account, the personal working directory and the files stored in it are deleted irreversibly and without prior notice. Material to be retained, including scripts, is requested as an output beforehand.

Publications

The GLEN SUF must be cited, including DOI and datafile version. Geodata are cited as required by their providers. Publications arising from work in the GLEN SDC must be notified to GLEN SDC.