

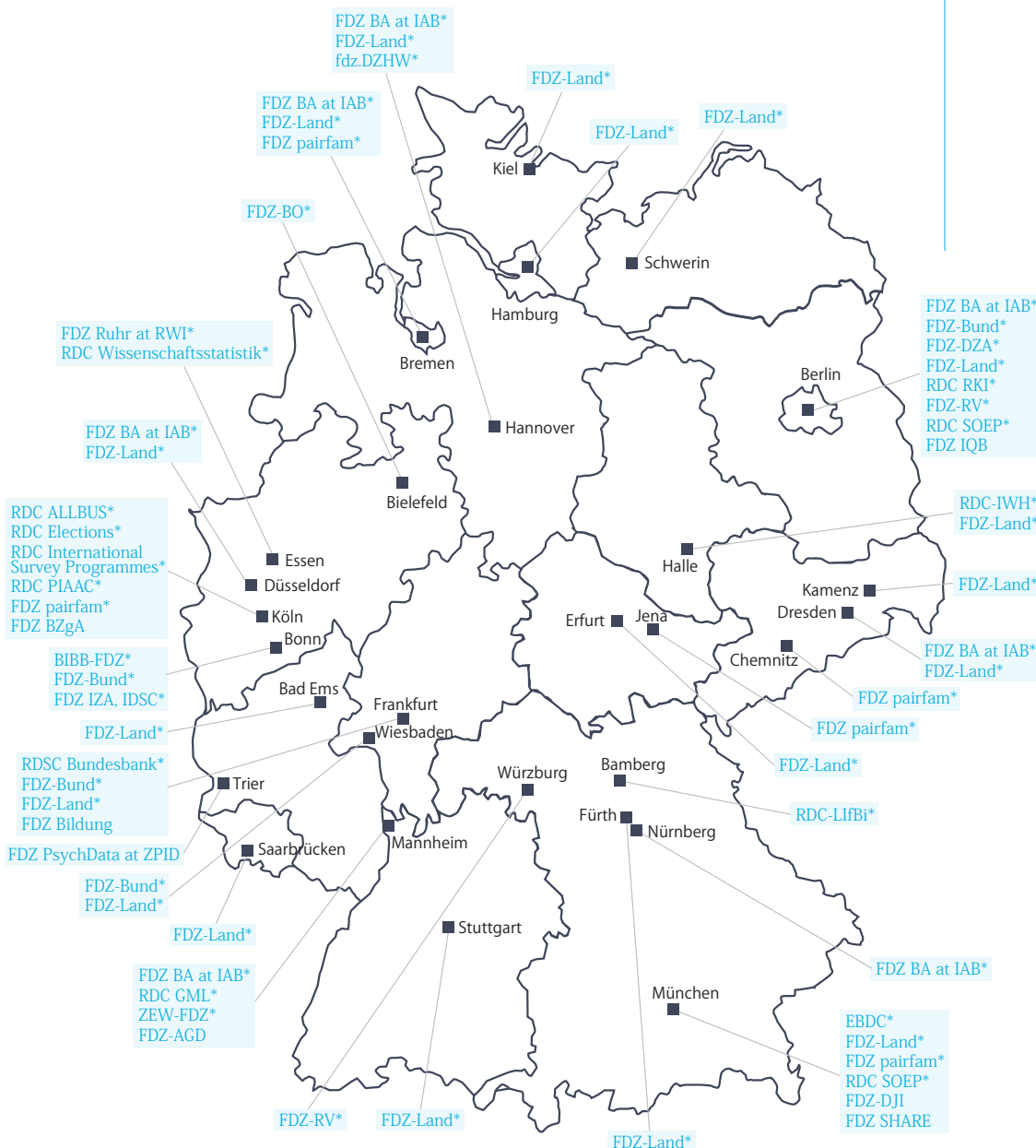
## Research Data Infrastructure accredited by the RatSWD

Social, behavioural, and economic research often requires access to sensitive microdata on individuals, households, or businesses. To satisfy the demands of data producers, data users, and data protection, the German Data Forum (RatSWD) - as one of many tasks - accredits research data centres (RDCs). Consequently, a network of 31 German RDCs has developed since the early 2000s.

The RDCs provide researchers with user-oriented, cost-efficient access to a wide range of data. Since 2009, the RDCs have been organised in the FDI Committee to coordinate the research data infrastructure. This bottom-up coordination fosters efficient governance as well as securing the quality of the research data infrastructure through monitoring procedures.

### Research Data Centres in 2018

(Most RDCs keep their German acronym FDZ)



### Available data

RDCs provide data from the following areas of research:

- Social Data
- Economic Data
- Education Data
- Health Data
- Behavioural Data
- Qualitative Data
- Other Data

### Key figures of the accredited RDCs in 2016

  
26,281  
Data users

  
352  
New datasets  
out of 3,214  
available datasets

  
1,833  
Publications  
based on the  
available data

  
73,332  
Downloads  
of openly  
available datasets

  
225.7  
Full-time staff

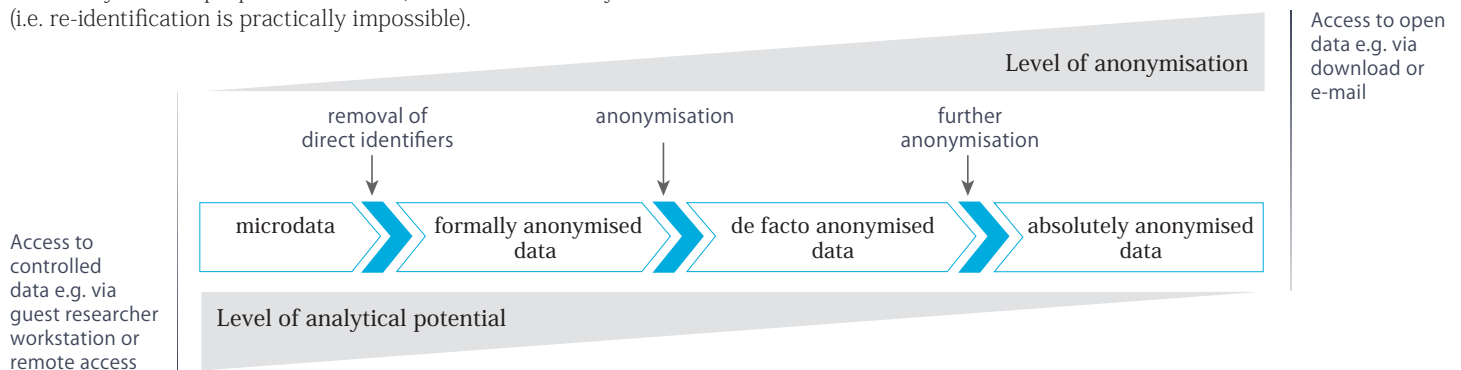
\* RDCs with guest researcher workstations

## Anonymisation concepts and data access

Data protection and the preservation of the analytical potential of the data need to be put in balance. Therefore, the RDCs pursue a variety of approaches regarding data anonymisation and data access.

Anonymisation measures range from formal anonymisation (i.e. deletion of direct identifiers such as names and addresses) to de facto anonymisation (i.e. individual information can be re-attributed only with disproportionate effort) and absolute anonymisation (i.e. re-identification is practically impossible).

Depending on the sensitivity of the data, the RDCs provide a wide range of access paths to their datasets. For less sensitive data, a large majority of RDCs provide off-site use through download or mail. For weakly anonymised data, many RDCs offer guest researcher workstations for on-site data access. Several RDCs also offer (controlled) remote access.



Source: RDCs of the Federal Statistical Office and the Statistical Offices of the Länder

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## Bottom-up governance to secure the quality of the research data infrastructure

The German Data Forum (RatSWD) is an advisory board made up of elected representatives from the data-using scientific community in the social sciences and appointed representatives of major German data producers. The FDI Committee consists of representatives from all accredited research data centres (RDCs). It complements the German Data Forum's strategic focus with a focus on day-to-day challenges and quality assurance.

### Accreditation

The German Data Forum (RatSWD) has developed standards and criteria for the accreditation of RDCs. Fully operational RDCs need to meet three mandatory criteria (in addition to further information criteria):

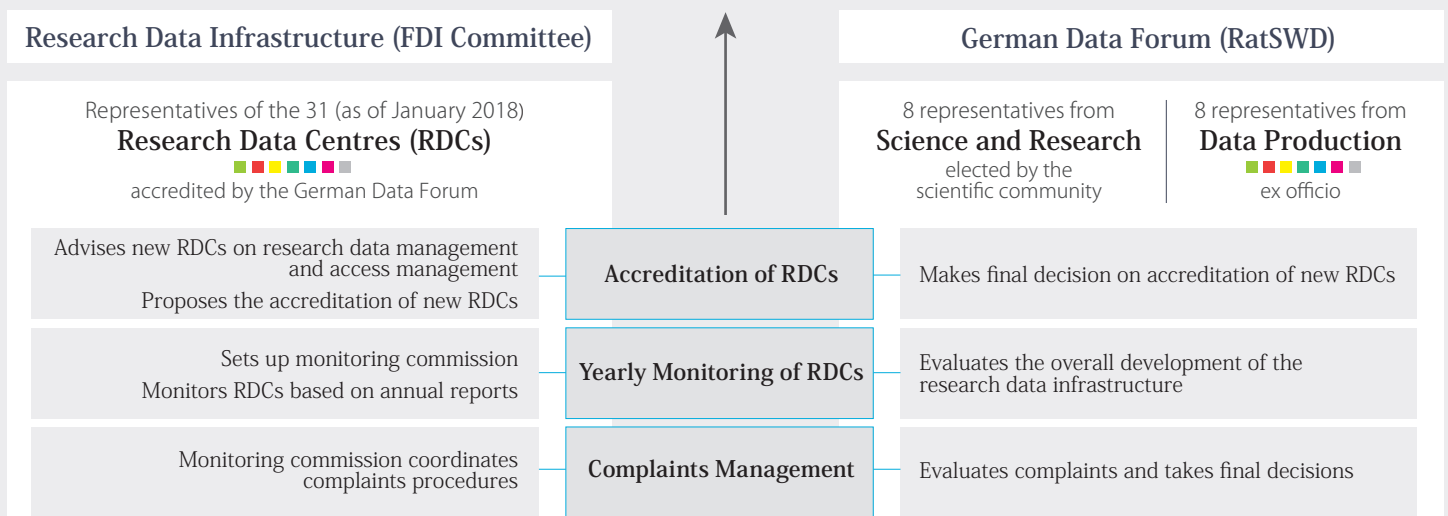
- provide at least one data access path
- provide sufficient data documentation
- ensure the long-term availability of the data

### Monitoring and Complaints Management

The FDI Committee elects a monitoring commission which manages:

- the annual monitoring of all accredited RDCs
- complaints from the research community about data access policies in RDCs

### The cooperation between the FDI Committee and the RatSWD: Developing and optimising the research data infrastructure



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German Data Forum (RatSWD)  
Chausseestraße 111  
D-10115 Berlin  
office@ratswd.de

[www.ratswd.de/en](http://www.ratswd.de/en)

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