

## Policy for access to data from the Swedish National Forest Inventory

### Background

Data from the Swedish National Forest Inventory (NFI) can be used for a variety of purposes, in addition to the core use of providing official statistics on state and change of Swedish forests. External users can make their own analyses through the system TaxWebb, accessible on <https://taxwebb.slu.se>, or basic data can be obtained from the NFI, upon request. However, certain restrictions apply in order to safeguard the long-term integrity of the NFI system. This document describes the policy for access to basic data from the Swedish NFI.

### Policy

Exact positions of the permanent plots of the NFI are protected by confidentiality pursuant Chapter 24, Section 8, of the Swedish Publicity and Secrecy Act. The reason is that stakeholders might otherwise undertake measures that could affect the development of conditions on the plots, leading to incorrect estimates based on NFI data. In addition, the collection of NFI data for producing statistics should be conducted so that landowners' possibilities to manage their lands are not affected, by making potentially sensitive data publicly available.

The policy for access to basic data from the *permanent plots* of the Swedish NFI is:

- (i) Access to plot data with slightly distorted coordinates is granted to all users. In this case, the recorded locations of the plots may deviate up to 800 meters from the true locations. This accuracy is sufficient for many purposes. Subsets of the NFI database, with distorted coordinates, are made available to users upon request.
- (ii) Access to plot data with exact plot locations is granted to staff within the Department of Forest Resource Management at SLU, working with official statistics production or analyses of similar kind. Examples of the latter kind include National Inventories of Landscapes in Sweden (NILS), Heureka RegVis, kNN Sweden, Forestry basic data, LULUCF sector greenhouse gas reporting, and NFI development.
- (iii) In addition to (ii), access to exact plot locations can be granted to research and environmental monitoring and analysis projects conducted by universities, non-profit research organisations, and governmental organisations.
- (iv) Access to exact plot locations may also be granted to other projects, resembling the ones specified in (iii).
- (v) Access to exact plot locations is normally *not* granted to private companies, non-governmental organisations, or individual persons other than those specified in (ii-iv).

The policy for access to basic data from the *temporary plots* of the Swedish NFI is:

- (vi) Access to plot data, including exact coordinates, is granted to all users. A large subset of these data are freely available for download at the NFI webpage. Additional subsets of the data are made available upon request. However, the freely available datasets do not contain data on variables judged to have a potential to affect landowners' possibilities to manage their forests (e.g., data on habitat type and old-growth forest).
- (vii) Access to all data from temporary plots are granted to the user category described under (ii), above. Access to all data from temporary plots may also be granted to the user categories described under (iii) and (iv), above.

To access data according to (i), (ii), and (vi), no formal application is needed. Data can be accessed either directly from the NFI webpage or through contacts with NFI staff.

To access data according to (iii), (iv) and (vii) a formal application must be submitted to the Programme Board of the Swedish NFI. A template, and further instructions, is obtained from the NFI staff. When access is granted, a separate agreement must be signed, ensuring that data are not distributed to third parties.