



*International Federation of Data Organizations (IFDO) was established in the mid-1970s as a response to the needs of the international social science research community. IFDO's main purpose is to facilitate and support research through cooperation between data organizations across countries, regions and continents. The main domains of IFDO are social sciences and humanities.*

# Policies for Sharing Research Data in Social Sciences and Humanities\*

## **A survey about research funders' policies**

With the increased awareness and emphasis by national governments and international bodies on open access and data sharing, research funding bodies are developing new instruments to support the development of efficient national and international research infrastructures.

The motivation for efforts in this area is an acknowledgement that the major challenges facing all countries in areas such as health, climate and energy cannot be dealt with adequately without available and easily accessible high quality data and information. It is recognized that in spite of large public investments in data collections and research worldwide, the possibilities for research to contribute the knowledge production needed to solve the challenges facing societies of today are hampered by lack of adequate data sharing arrangements. This has challenged science policy makers and research funders to seek tools for increasing openness and sharing of research data.

Against this background IFDO conducted an informal web-survey in 2013, collecting information on current institutional research data policies. The survey focused mainly on the social sciences and on formal data policies of key research funders, with an overall aim to produce easily accessible information on the basic questions, arrangements and tools fostering access to research data.

The report provides an overview of current data management trends and data policies worldwide and discusses country-by-country results with emphasis on the social sciences.

## **Findings**

43 individuals from 32 countries completed the survey, of which 18 is European and 10 'non-Western' countries. The examples from selected research funders, and the IFDO survey results, only provide a glimpse into research funders' data policies within the social science and humanities. But a few points can be drawn from the material.

The IFDO-findings clearly indicate that there is a growing awareness among key research funders that the possibilities for high quality empirical research is restricted by lack of easy and open access to high quality data. However, they also indicate that the appropriate data sharing policies and the required research infrastructures to implement policies are often lacking or immature.

Whereas many countries and research organizations adhere to the principles of open access and oblige to follow various international open data and data preservation declarations, the implementation varies widely across countries, research funders and disciplines.

The relatively small number of responses from 'non-Western' countries may illustrate that the infrastructure for sharing social science data is not yet at a point where specific policies and procedures are in place.

The examples of research funders policies and practices and the survey results indicate that institutional research infrastructures and data sharing requirements across the world are more developed within the social sciences than the within the humanities and medical and health sciences.

There is a clear need to strengthen existing data policies and research data infrastructures and develop new policies and infrastructures worldwide. The future success of efforts in this area relies on the ability of policy makers and funders to move from high-policy statements to policy enforcements and monitoring and from short-term funding to long-term funding and institutional models that build trust and confidence.

---

\* The full version of the report is available at [ifdo.org](http://ifdo.org)

**Table 1: Selected questions from the IFDO-survey.  
Research Funders' policies on data archiving and sharing requirements.**

	General data sharing requirements	SSH data sharing requirements	Provide resources to support archiving	Reward producers of reusable data	Data management plans in application	Share data after project completion	Provisions for formal archiving	Apply standards for data / metadata
Australia	●	●			●	●	●	
Canada	●	●	●		●	●	●	●
China		●						
Czech Republic								
Denmark						●		
Estonia					●	●	●	
Finland	●	●	●		●	●	●	●
Germany		●			●			
Hungary		●			●			
India	●	●	●		●	●	●	●
Italy					●		●	
Japan				●				
Latvia								
Lithuania	●	●			●	●	●	●
Luxembourg	●	●	●	●	●			
Namibia	●	●			●	●	●	●
Netherlands	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
New Zealand								
Norway	●				●	●		
Phillippines								
Romania				●				
Russia								
Sierra Leone		●	●		●			●
Slovak Republic					●			
Slovenia	●							
Spain		●						
Sweden	●	●			●	●	●	●
Switzerland	●	●	●		●			
Taiwan	●	●	●	●	●	●		
UK		●	●		●	●	●	●
Uruguay								
USA	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Dots represents individual respondents

- = Yes/Very common
- = Somewhat common
- Empty = Not at all common/NA
- = Enforce
- = Require
- = Recommend