

WDS Data Sharing Principles

Purpose

The International Council for Science – [World Data System](#) (ICSU-WDS) aims to promote universal and equitable access to quality-assured scientific data, data services, products and information, with a view towards long term data stewardship. Furthermore, ICSU-WDS is committed to fostering compliance with agreed-upon data standards and conventions, and providing mechanisms to facilitate and improve access to data. As the leading international, multidisciplinary organization in the provision of trusted data services, ICSU-WDS has adopted Data Sharing Principles to advance its goals.

The Principles express core ethical commitments that are operationalized in [WDS Certification](#). For Regular and Network Members, it is anticipated that existing organizational policies align with these Principles; Partner and Associate Members are not subject to certification and therefore are not required to adopt them, but are encouraged to do so. The Principles embody the spirit of ‘open science’ meant to unite diverse communities of data producers and data users, and thus could be adopted by anyone pursuing science for the public good.

The ICSU-WDS Data Sharing Principles are in line with the data policies of national and international initiatives, including those of the [Group on Earth Observations](#), the [G8 Science Ministers’ Statement](#) and [Open Data Charter](#), the [OECD Principles and Guidelines for Access to Research Data from Public Funding](#), as well as the forthcoming *Science International Accord on Open Data in a Big Data World* enunciated jointly by the International Council for Science, the Global Network of Science Academies, the International Social Science Council, and the World Academy of Science.

Principles

1. Data, metadata, products, and information should be fully and openly shared, subject to national or international jurisdictional laws and policies, including respecting appropriate extant restrictions, and in accordance with international standards of ethical research conduct.
2. Data, metadata, products, and information produced for research, education, and public-domain use will be made available with minimum time delay and free of charge, or for no more than the cost of dissemination, which may be waived for lower-income user communities to support equity in access.
3. All who produce, share, and use data and metadata are stewards of those data, and have responsibility for ensuring that the authenticity, quality, and integrity of the data are preserved, and respect for the data source is maintained by ensuring privacy where appropriate, and encouraging appropriate citation of the dataset and original work and acknowledgement of the data repository.
4. Data should be labelled ‘sensitive’ or ‘restricted’ only with appropriate justification and following clearly defined protocols, and should in any event be made available for use on the least restrictive basis possible.