

# ICSU-WDS Bylaws

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*Approved at the 15th Meeting of the WDS-SC (September 2016)*

## Preamble

These Bylaws are authorized by the Constitution of ICSU-WDS and are developed by the WDS-SC in consultation with all WDS Member Organizations.

## Article I. WDS Membership

### 1. Data Sharing Principles

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.

### Principles

- 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.
- 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.

- 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.

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.

As part of the WDS membership requirements, Regular and Network Members agree to adhere to the ICSU-WDS Data Sharing Principles [see Article 3].

## 2. Categories of Membership

The WDS Scientific Committee (WDS-SC) has established four categories of membership.

- **Regular Members:** Organizations that are data stewards and/or data analysis services (e.g., data centres and services that support scientific research by holding and providing data or data products).
- **Network Members:** Umbrella bodies representing groups of data stewardship organizations and or data analysis services, some of which may or may not be WDS Regular Members. Usually serve as coordinating agents for nodes that have common characteristics and mostly common disciplines (e.g., International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange).
- **Partner Members:** Organizations that are not data stewards or data analysis services, but that contribute support or funding to ICSU-WDS and/or WDS Members (e.g., International Scientific Unions of ICSU supporting data services, and public and private agencies that provide technical or financial support).
- **Associate Members:** Organizations that are interested in the WDS endeavour and participating in our discussions, but that do not contribute direct funding or other material support (ICSU National Members, Academies, and some commercial entities could be in this category).

## 3. Accreditation of Regular and Network Members

To be accredited as WDS Regular and Network Members, candidate organizations will be subject to membership requirements which include a certification procedure providing transparent and objective base for their evaluation.

The certification will ensure the trustworthiness of ICSU-WDS in terms of authenticity, integrity, confidentiality, and availability of data and services. The certification process is based on a catalogue of



evaluation criteria: one catalogue for Regular Members and another for Network Members. A summary of the most recent catalogues is available on the ICSU-WDS website.

Candidates will be asked to demonstrate their capabilities by means of an application form based on the relevant catalogue of criteria. Guidance will be provided for each criterion, as required. All submitted applications will be subject to a minimum of two independent reviews and the final decision on certification will be the responsibility of the WDS-SC, which functions as the certification authority. If necessary, the WDS-SC will engage further experts for the evaluation of specific applications.

When an applying Regular Member is under the umbrella of a WDS Network Member, the certification process might be conducted under the auspices of the Network Member if its certification procedure is aligned with that of ICSU-WDS. In this case, the WDS-SC will require the applying Regular Member to provide evidence of its existing certification and may request further evidence to confirm its suitability for WDS certification.

The certification procedure will be used for periodic assessment and monitoring of WDS Members, as well as the overall performance of ICSU-WDS. All steps involved will be overseen by the WDS-SC or its designated authority.

Applicants can challenge the decisions of the certification authority by submitting a formal request to the Chair of the WDS-SC. A second round of reviews can be ordered if deemed necessary, and a detailed response including evidence supporting the final decision shall be given to the applicant within 3 months.

As part of membership requirements, WDS Regular and Network members will be invited by the WDS-SC to conduct a maximum of two membership certification reviews per year as a contribution to the WDS community effort.

**WDS Regular and Network Membership is a five-stage process:**

1. Candidate organization completes an ***Expression of Interest for WDS Regular or Network Membership***
2. Organization is certified using the applicable ***catalogue of evaluation criteria*** (Regular or Network)
3. Organization adheres to the ICSU-WDS Data Sharing Principles [see Article 1] and signs a Letter of Agreement with the International Council for Science (ICSU) [see Article 5]
4. ***Membership*** as an ICSU-WDS Regular or Network Member is granted once evidence of the organization's suitability is deemed satisfactory by the WDS-SC
5. Membership will be reviewed every 3 years and organizations recertified.

#### 4. Accreditation of Partner and Associate Members

Candidate Partner and Associate Members submit the appropriate **Expression of Interest for WDS Membership**, which will be reviewed by the WDS-SC. If accepted, an official invitation will be sent, and the Partner or Associate Member is then co-opted. Partner and Associate Members are not subject to the WDS certification procedure and Data Sharing Principles [see Article 1] but are expected to sign a Letter of Agreement with International Council for Science (ICSU) [see Article 5]

#### 5. Letter of Agreement with International Council for Science (ICSU)

For all categories of WDS Member, membership requires the signing of a Letter of Agreement (or a similar document) between the Member Organization and ICSU. Templates for this agreement will be provided on the WDS website.

#### 6. Official Representatives

WDS Members will designate an Official Representative to act as the contact person with the WDS-SC and WDS International Programme Office (WDS-IPO). This Official Representative shall attend the ICSU-WDS Members' Forum and Conference every two years. All official communications and consultations with WDS Members will be sent to the Official Representative.

#### 7. WDS Members' Public Profiles

Part of the information gathered during the accreditation process will be utilized to build the public profile of a WDS Member for use on the WDS website and in other publications. This public profile is editable by the Members' Official Representative or a delegated contact through the Membership Management Tool provided on the WDS website.

#### 8. WDS Members' Forum

A 1-day WDS Members' Forum will be organized before each WDS Conference. The Forum will be organized by the WDS-IPO and WDS-SC, and will include a **Scientific Session** and a **Plenary Session**. The Scientific Session will be an opportunity for WDS Members to report on their activities and engage with other Members. The Plenary Session will provide a formal mechanism for membership consultation, where Membership issues can be discussed. WDS Members will be invited by the WDS-IPO to submit any questions, concerns, or complaints to be discussed at least 6 months prior to the Plenary Session.

#### 9. Activity Reports

Official Representatives of WDS Members are expected to attend and participate in the WDS Members' Forum, as agreed upon during admission into ICSU-WDS, and will be urged to present a Report (oral or poster) on their organization's activities over the previous two years. All WDS Members will also be



requested to submit a brief Activity Report to the WDS-SC. For Regular and Network Members this will be part of the recertification every three years.

## Article II. WDS Working Groups (WDS-WGs)

As stated in Article IIV of the WDS Constitution, the 'WDS Scientific Committee (WDS-SC) may establish committees, working groups, or task groups as needed to accomplish WDS goals and objectives'. WDS Working Groups are defined as follows.

### 1. WDS-WG Functions

WDS-WGs may be established to define, coordinate, and facilitate the implementation of projects or activities addressing the goals and objectives of ICSU-WDS.

### 2. Chairs and Membership

The WDS-SC will appoint one of its members to Co-chair every WDS-WG, and may appoint other Co-chairs from the representatives of participating WDS Members or other organizations. In the case that the term of the WDS-SC appointed Co-chair ends before the termination of the WG, another Co-chair from the WDS-SC shall be appointed. WDS-WGs' membership shall include representatives from external participating organizations and community experts. The WDS-IPO Executive Director, or a designated WDS-IPO staff, shall be an ex officio member of each WDS-WG.

### 3. WDS-WG Establishment

The WDS-WG Co-chairs are responsible for preparing the WG Charter for approval by the WDS-SC. This document includes the WG's name, as well as its Terms of Reference, deliverables and milestones, procedures, meetings schedule, financial support, and proposed membership. WGs are normally established for a maximum period of two years.

### 4. Progress, Review, and Termination

The Co-chairs of a WDS-WG will report to the WDS-SC Executive Committee on progress and accomplishments at least twice a year—during the WDS-SC face-to-face meetings. In addition, the membership of WGs can be changed, their Charter revised, and the WG terminated. At the end of its two-year period, each WG shall be reviewed by the WDS-SC—possibly involving WDS Members—and a decision will be taken to terminate or extend the WG for a further period.

### 5. WDS Support

Individual members' participation in WDS-WG meetings is voluntary, and no financial support is available from the WDS-IPO for travel and other costs. Any financial support needed by a WDS-WG must



be clearly defined in its Charter, and will be met with additional funds received through grant applications. Meetings will be conducted by electronic means (GoToMeeting or WebEx) provided by the WDS-IPO or other partners. Face-to-face meetings at international conferences may be organized as the opportunity arises, but only if financial support can be provided.

### **Article III. WDS Conference**

The biennial (two-yearly) Conferences of ICSU-WDS and ICSU's Committee on Data for Science and Technology (ICSU-CODATA) have complementary objectives and overlapping audiences. Resultantly, both organizations have taken the decision to merge their Conferences and to co-organize a unique event, with the aim of this becoming the world's principal conference on scientific data.

Official Representatives of WDS Members will be expected to participate and contribute to both the joint CODATA–WDS Conference and to its co-located WDS Members' Forum.

#### **1. Title of Conference**

The Conference title will consist of two parts: the standard generic Conference name—SciDataCon—followed by the year, and a specific scientific theme. For example, 'SciDataCon 2014: Theme of the Conference'. The theme of each Conference will be jointly determined by the Executive Committees of ICSU-WDS and ICSU-CODATA (the joint ExCom).

#### **2. Organization and Funding**

The international Conference will be convened and organized by ICSU-CODATA and ICSU-WDS. However, it will be open to other organizations from academia and the private sector to co-sponsor and financially support the event.

#### **3. Conference Scientific Programme**

The scientific programme will be under the responsibility of a Scientific Organizing Committee jointly appointed by ICSU-CODATA and ICSU-WDS. The Conference programme will be spread over 2–3 days.

#### **4. Venue**

ICSU-CODATA and ICSU-WDS will make a joint Call to their respective constituencies for the hosting of the subsequent Conference. This Call will also be opened up to other organizations. The Executive Committees of both ICSU organizations will proactively encourage synergies between their Members and partners to maximize the chances of strong proposals. The final decision of the joint ExCom on the host and venue of the subsequent Conference will be announced at the end of each Conference.



Once selected, the local host of the Conference shall provide the necessary support for its realization. An onsite visit shall be organized by ICSU-CODATA and ICSU-WDS such that the details can be negotiated and discussed with the local organizers. In particular, registration fees should be kept to a minimum.

#### 5. Business Meetings

A joint ExCom meeting will be organized immediately following the conclusion of the Conference for half-a-day. The WDS-SC will then commence its regular Committee meeting on the morning after the joint ExCom (for 2 days).

### Article V. Parliamentary Authority

The rules contained in the current edition of [Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised](#)<sup>1</sup> shall govern ICSU-WDS for cases in which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these Bylaws and any special rules that ICSU-WDS may adopt.

### Article VI. Amendment

These Bylaws shall be amended by the WDS-SC after consultation with WDS Members at any of their regular or special meetings, or by electronic consultation.

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<sup>1</sup> Following ICSU's usual procedural practice.