

Guidelines for WDS-Endorsed Meetings

1. Overview and Purpose

The World Data System (WDS) endorses¹ meetings that are designed to bring together members of the data stewardship community, whether or not they are formally part of the WDS membership. Many of these meetings have a regional focus (e.g., the WDS Asia–Oceania Conferences in 2017 and 2019, and the WDS Latin America and Caribbean Scientific Data Management Workshop in 2018). However, meetings with a topical focus (e.g., certification) or that bring together scientific communities (e.g., the Polar Data Fora) are also possible. Endorsing regional, topical, and community meetings is seen as an important mechanism to further the work of WDS, and in particular, to foster two-way communication with members of the data stewardship community, data (or data-oriented) scientists, and other stakeholders.

Any meeting that is endorsed (or co-endorsed) by WDS must be relevant to the [WDS Strategic Targets](#). Moreover, there must be **formal approval** of the goals, organization, and agenda of any meeting by the WDS Scientific Committee (WDS-SC) before it can be considered or advertised as a ‘WDS-endorsed’ meeting.

WDS can facilitate meetings that do not explicitly advance the WDS Strategic Targets, including participating in or making presentations at such meetings. However, it must be clear that these meetings are not directly endorsed by WDS, and they must not be called a ‘WDS meeting’.

Here we provide guidance about how to apply for WDS endorsement of a meeting, what is expected from WDS-endorsed meetings, and the roles and interactions between WDS and the meeting organizer(s).

2. Addressing the WDS Remit

The WDS remit is to address data stewardship across all disciplines, and—unless a meeting is organized for a specific disciplinary community(ies), and clearly promoted as such—it is typically expected that both regional and topical WDS meetings are multidisciplinary rather than focussed on certain areas of science.

The WDS membership largely consists of data repositories and data service providers, and it is expected that these organizations are well represented in the audience of a meeting. The repositories and data service providers do not need to be WDS Members. Indeed, the WDS-SC has a strong interest in meetings that advocate the benefits of repository certification and WDS membership to the wider audience of data stewards.

¹ WDS endorsement of a meeting does not necessarily imply financial sponsorship of that meeting.

WDS strives to work closely with the Regional Offices (ROs) of the International Science Council (ISC), namely, the RO for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP), the RO for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC), and the RO for Africa (ROA). WDS expects the organizers of meetings with a geographical focus in any of these regions to liaise with the appropriate RO at an early stage and ensure their active involvement in the planning of the meeting.

3. Procedure for Applying for WDS Endorsement of a Meeting

Proposals for holding a WDS-endorsed meeting are invited from organizations, agencies, or individuals worldwide. A written proposal should be submitted to the WDS International Programme Office (WDS-IPO; ipo@icsu-wds.org); which will disseminate this to the WDS-SC for a decision on whether the proposal adequately addresses the WDS Strategic Targets. There is no specific deadline for proposal submission, but it should be recognized that the WDS-SC will normally consider a proposal at its next monthly teleconference, and hence it may take up to three months after submission for the WDS-SC to make a decision.

A proposal should list the names, affiliations, and email contact information of the main organizers, along with a description of the hosting organization and its capacity to coordinate and promote the meeting. In addition, the proposal should include information on (see also Section 7):

- 1) The overall purpose of the meeting and its specific goals.
- 2) How the meeting addresses the WDS Strategic Targets.
- 3) The intended audience, in terms of roles (e.g., representatives of repositories, data scientists, academics), scientific disciplines, and countries/regions.
- 4) Co-sponsors and other organizations involved in the meeting.
- 5) The provisional agenda, including any plans for side meetings and/or training sessions.

The WDS-IPO and WDS-SC may initiate the planning of a meeting. In this case, it is assumed that the meeting is aligned with the WDS Strategic Targets. Nevertheless, such meetings must still adhere to all aspects of these Guidelines.

4. Organizational Structure

The local host may choose how many and what committees must be set up to realize a meeting; for example, a Scientific Organizing Committee (SOC), Programme Committee (PC), Local Organizing Committee (LOC), and so on. Each committee must include at least one representative from WDS, either from the WDS-SC or the WDS-IPO. The WDS-IPO must be represented on the LOC.

WDS representatives on committees will be responsible for

- Ensuring that the meeting remains consistent with WDS goals as the planning evolves.
- Communicating plans to the WDS-SC and seeking approval for key decisions, such as the choice of invited/keynote speakers or invited participants.
- Communicating advice and decisions from the WDS-SC to the committee.

5. Funding

Funding of a meeting is the responsibility of the local organizer; WDS should not be expected to provide funding. Participation of SC members in a meeting (or an associated training session) cannot be guaranteed unless funding is provided to cover their attendance. If a meeting is co-located with a face-to-face Meeting of the WDS-SC, which then facilitates the participation of some SC members, it is expected that the local organizer arranges the facilities (rooms, etc.) for the WDS-SC Meeting.

Decisions about registration or other fees are left to the appropriate Organizing Committee of a meeting. However, WDS expects arrangements are in place that assist the participation of early career researchers and representatives from low and middle income countries (LMICs); for example, through registration waivers or bursaries. The reference for LMICs is the World Bank Data. Members of the WDS-SC are not expected to pay the registration fee for a meeting, and this cost should be covered by the local organizer.

The local organizer is required to provide individual invoices/receipts for registration fees. They are also required to provide attendance certificates for participants, if requested.

Financial sponsorship by other organizations of a WDS-endorsed meeting is welcomed, but this must be agreed with the WDS-SC in all cases and particularly for sponsorship by **commercial organizations**. Visibility of a sponsoring organization at the event and in advance is allowed, but again should be agreed with the WDS-SC before publication. Sponsorship packages developed by the local organizers should outline distinct levels of visibility and corresponding financial (or other) contributions.

6. Branding, Communication, and Media

Communications about a meeting must include the WDS logo, links to both the WDS website and the meeting website, and (where appropriate) state clearly the WDS mission statement:

WDS enables universal and equitable (full and open) access to quality-assured scientific data, data services, products and information

The WDS-IPO will supply WDS-branded banners, fliers, and posters to be used at the event. Support for and contributions to promotional texts, articles, and news pieces will be also provided by the WDS-IPO, which will

advertise the meeting to the WDS membership and beyond through the WDS website and its communication channels.

7. Criteria for Proposal Evaluation

All proposals will be evaluated by the WDS Scientific Committee using the following criteria.

- 1) Is WDS being asked to endorse or co-endorse the meeting?
- 2) Are the goals of the meeting clear?
- 3) Does the proposal address how this meeting fits the WDS Strategic Targets?
- 4) Does the invitee list include existing WDS Members and/or potential Members?
- 5) If this is a regional and/or topical meeting, is the invitee list appropriately broad?
- 6) Have the relevant ISC Regional Offices been approached (if appropriate)?
- 7) Are there plans for including early career researchers and participants from LMICs?
- 8) Are there clear plans for side meetings and/or training sessions?
- 9) In what capacity (if any) are SC members being asked to attend?
- 10) Is it clear how the meeting will be funded?
- 11) Is it clear what financial and/or resource implications there are for WDS?
- 12) Is it clear who from the WDS-SC/WDS-IPO has already been approached/is prepared to be on the organizing committee(s)?
- 13) Is it clear what pre-meeting actions are required from WDS?
- 14) Is it clear what post-meeting actions are required from WDS?