

World Data System Scientific Committee (WDS-SC) 2015–2018 Teleconference #14

Teleconference #14 was held on Wednesday, 18 January 2017 at 13:00 UTC

Summary:

Review of Action items

- A draft poster will be prepared for the ICSU-WDS abstract submitted for the European Geosciences Union General Assembly 2017 (EGU 2017). The draft will be brought to the 16th WDS-SC Meeting for discussion, since EGU 2017 is at the end of April.
- The deadline is 20 January to submit proposals for a town hall session at EGU 2017. Sufficient SC members are attending EGU 2017 to host a WDS town hall, and it is considered worthwhile if the correct topic can be highlighted. The WDS International Programme Office (WDS-IPO) will generate a draft proposal very quickly.
- The Membership Maturity document is being fleshed out, linking it to recent work and defining the scope of the guidance that must be covered. Comments from the WDS-SC were welcomed on the current version.
- The WDS Executive Director (ED) will attend the kick-off meeting of the OpenAIRE Connect project, which will provide a brokering capability to help ICSU-WDS make its Metadata Catalogue operational. The opportunity will be used to discuss in detail how ICSU-WDS and OpenAIRE will interact moving forwards.
- The SC Chair will visit the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) in mid-April, and has set up a meeting to discuss the possibility of associating WDS training with the IIASA Summer School.
- The WDS-IPO had a call with the International Union of Basic and Clinical Pharmacology about its planned WDS Webinar, and this will now take place at the end of February.

Core Certification of Trustworthy Data Repositories

- Significant progress was made at the end of last year: the Core Certification Requirements were completed, and an alignment document was prepared that defined a number of principles, as well as the necessary short- and long-term actions. The Data Seal of Approval (DSA) and ICSU-WDS are now entering the short-term alignment phase, and the associated tasks will be completed by a new (large and inclusive) Board consisting of members of the DSA board and the WDS-SC.
- The timeline in the alignment document shows that there is a lot for the Board to achieve this year: generate Board regulations by March, decided on a common branding by June, have a common assessment tool by July, and formulate governance and business models by December. In addition, it must put procedures in place, organize a common pool of reviewers, set up webinars, and so on. The first meeting of the Board will be on Monday, 30 January.

SC Meetings in 2017 & Associated Events

- a. Two-day African Workshop + WDS-SC#16
 - The 16th WDS-SC Meeting will take place on 10–11 April in Grenoble. The draft Agenda for the WDS-SC Meeting will be discussed during the teleconference in March.
 - The Workshop will be held on 12–13 April at the same venue. Potential participants from Africa identified by the WDS-SC were sent an invitation letter in December. The WDS-IPO has received a number of positive responses, but many need travel support and this cannot be committed at present.
 - The latest iteration of the Workshop Programme is based around the people most likely to attend because they have travel support. Unfortunately, this creates an imbalance in terms of the scope of the Workshop, and the WDS-IPO asked the WDS-SC whether the present Programme was seen as an acceptable compromise with some rephrasing of the targets. The hope is still to get travel funding, including some not tied to specific people, such that the WDS-SC can address the imbalance.
- b. WDS Asia–Oceania Conference + WDS-SC#17
 - Flyers for the Conference were distributed at a Future Earth meeting in Tokyo. The meeting—an International Codesign Workshop on Earth Observations in Support of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—was co-organized by ICSU-WDS, and focussed on urban areas in the Asia–Pacific region. Thus, it was a useful community at which to advertise the Conference.

- The 17th WDS-SC Meeting will be held after the Workshop, on 29 September–1 October, possibly at the Universal Communication Research Institute of the National Institute of Information and Communications Technology in Keihanna Science City.

SciDataCon 2018 and IDW2

- The WDS ED, the ED of the ICSU Committee on Data for Science and Technology (ICSU-CODATA), and the Secretary General of the Research Data Alliance (RDA) had a meeting in which it was agreed to try and organize a second International Data Week (IDW2) in September/October 2018.
- The three organizations hope to very quickly send out a call for Expressions of Interest (Eols) to host IDW2 and a draft is already prepared. The WDS-SC was asked to comment on this. Some changes to the format have been proposed within the draft to address feedback received from IDW: the main part of IDW2 will be shorter (four working days) and the events better integrated whilst recognizing the specificities of SciDataCon and the RDA Plenary. ICSU-CODATA, RDA, and ICSU-WDS will continue to be the lead organizations of IDW2; they will cooperate with others, but it will be marketed as a CODATA–RDA–WDS product.

AGU 2016

- ICSU-WDS submitted a session for the 2016 Fall Meeting of the American Geophysical Union (AGU 2016). While none of the proposers were able to attend, the session went very well and the WDS-IPO received highly positive feedback. A follow-up session has now been planned for EGU 2017, although it will probably focus more on persistent identifiers than certification.
- It was suggested that the WDS-SC should already start thinking about AGU 2017, because the deadline of the Call for Session Proposals is Wednesday, 20 April.

UN World Data Forum

- The UN World Data Forum was held on 15–18 January 2017 in Cape Town. It was very well attended, with official figures suggesting that over 1,000 delegates attended from around 170 different countries. Attendees consisted largely of those from national statistical offices and governmental departments, UN agency personnel and associates, private sector firms and nongovernmental organizations in the UN space, as well as academics.
- The overall impression was that there is significant momentum in trying to establish infrastructure to monitor and measure the SDGs. However, there is a very clear divide in the standards and ideas measured against. Statistical offices are recording history and making it statistically defensible, whereas those in the area of global change are modelling future possibilities and outcomes. Some national statistical offices have started lobbying their governments to also be involved in the determination of future forecasts/models of what will happen with the SDGs. There is also significant work still to be done to introduce the broad standards-driven data environment to the wider UN community.
- People in the session included WDS involvement talked at length about the roles of standards, specifications, and certification. About 50 people were in attendance, and with many of them from the statistics environment, a few seeds were possibly planted for future collaboration. The conference will probably happen again in two-years' time, and the WDS-SC will have to decide then if advantage should be taken of these seeds to organize a bigger session. A more immediate action is to possibly talk directly with the national statistical offices in countries where they have influence such that ICSU-WDS can open discussions at a practical level.

Membership Management Update

- The WDS-SC approved an Eol from the Institute of Marine Research for WDS Regular membership.
- The joint DSA–WDS Certification Board will be responsible for reviewing the applications of Regular Members, and the WDS-SC discussed how ICSU-WDS will coordinate between its overseeing of the WDS membership accreditation and the Board dealing with the certification. This procedure needs to be outlined clearly for applicant organizations. In particular, the email sent to an organization when it expresses interest must contain information that reflects the new process.
- The WDS-SC will evaluate whether an organization fits the remit for WDS Regular membership from its Eol. It will then delegate certification of the organization to the joint Board. Once the certification is awarded, the WDS-SC will ascertain whether all WDS membership requirements are satisfied, and therefore whether to approve the organization as a Regular Member.
- The WDS-SC approved the application for WDS Regular membership of the Centre for Astronomical Data of the Institute of Astronomy of the Russian Academy of Sciences.