World Data System Scientific Committee (WDS-SC) 2015–2018 Teleconference #16

Teleconference #16 took place on Thursday, 23 March 2017 at 13:00 UTC

Summary

Review of Action Items

- A first telecon took place to discuss the WDS Early Career Researcher Network. A second one will be held at the end of March, and a first draft of the outputs presented at the 16th WDS-SC Meeting (WDS-SC #16). The WDS Data Stewardship awardees have many good ideas, but there needs to be some guidance from WDS-SC.
- A draft Call for hosting the WDS International Technology Office will be produced for WDS-SC #16 in consultation with the Chair and Vice-chairs. The context and positioning will need to be reconfigured in accordance with discussions with partners. The WDS-SC also has to think about the timing of the Call.
- Good progress has been made on the Membership Maturity document, and the latest draft will be distributed for review at WDS-SC #16.
- There is no new information on the WDS Latin American Workshop, but the hope is to have news in time for WDS-SC #16, where time has been scheduled to present some thinking on how the Workshop will be organized. Although the Workshop will promote organizations in the region to join ICSU-WDS, known groups will be encouraged to become WDS Members beforehand such that they can help organize the Workshop.

Draft Agenda WDS-SC #16

- The period covered by first WDS Strategic Plan is close to ending, and so an Agenda Item will briefly go over the mechanism for revising the Plan, including taking stock of its implementation.
- Actions connected to the Implementation Plan are updated on an ongoing basis, and so the WDS-SC only needs to look at those parts it wants to focus on. The current Implementation Plan covers 2016–2017, and so although the emphasis at the Meeting is to look at existing actions, the WDS-SC may also need to start thinking about the next Plan.
- The WDS-SC has raised the issue that candidate WDS Members from developing countries may struggle to match expectations due to the way their capacity is assessed, and to the fact that they subcontract some elements of their data stewardship. The document package will include inputs for a discussion on this subject.
- Agenda Items will be swapped around so that the two on Africa can be discussed back-to-back. Invited guests then do not have to stay the whole day for Items that may not be of interest.

Conferences/Workshops

a. Two-day African Workshop

- The draft agenda for the Workshop was discussed. A number of presentations giving context on ICSU-WDS and its key topics are grouped at the start since many attendees may not be familiar with them.
- There are two oral sessions, each containing four presentations from African initiatives to leave plenty of time for talking. The morning session focusses on data initiatives having both European and African partners, with a representative of one partner giving the presentation.
- There is some spread of disciplines, but the morning session mainly concerns climate science. The Social Sciences are unfortunately not represented, since none of the people suggested can attend. They will be strongly urged to send posters to ensure some representation from this domain.
- The poster session is missing from the agenda, and will be included; ideally, on the first day to help stimulate discussions. A message will then be sent to everyone with the updated agenda, encouraging those who cannot attend/give an oral presentation to send/bring a poster. Posters by those giving oral presentations and by SC members will also be welcomed.
- A session at the end of the first day will sum up the practical issues facing initiatives: a list of commonalities that can be looked at during the breakouts on the morning of the second day (topics will be refined after the session). Moderators for the breakouts will be identified from participants on the first day by looking for key people who are active in discussions.
- Institut de recherche pour le développement will fund the representatives of four of its African Partners to attend, with the idea to bring someone from North Africa, South Africa, West Africa, and Madagascar.

b. SciDataCon 2018 and IDW II

- The deadline for submitting Expressions of Interest (EoIs) to host International Data Week (IDW) II has almost been reached. Two EoIs have been received thus far that could possibly lead to a full proposal; however, in both cases some liaison is needed with the proposers.

IIASA Summer School
- ICSU-WDS has been talking with the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) about it becoming a WDS Network Member. As part of this, ICSU-WDS will offer IIASA help with the training for its Summer School.
- Each of the training modules previously listed by the WDS-SC has been fleshed out as a topic that could be covered during a seminar. Rather than proposing different collection of topics, a menu approach is considered better, whereby a list of topics is provided with some labelled as 'essential' and others 'optional', depending on the interests of the audience. Each topic can be easily conceived as a half-day or longer session that can then be bundled according to needs: a one-/two-day primer or a one-/two-week seminar that really goes in deep on the issues of data management.
- An emphasis on case study approaches was especially appreciated by the WDS-SC, since there is a concern that the topics might be seen as a bit 'dry' and 'boring', and bringing in real-world examples and datasets/issues that the students themselves are facing will create a more stimulating programme.
- The WDS-SC suggested to remove topics not addressing the specificities of ICSU-WDS. The focus must be on what ICSU-WDS can bring that no-one else can, which is about treatment of data, and issues such as ethics and confidentiality. There is a distinction between preserving data such that they are reusable and making them available and discoverable (i.e., the WDS mission), and data analysis. Data stewardship is unique to ICSU-WDS, and whilst data integration and use can only happen when data are well managed, use in itself is one step beyond the WDS remit.
- A second draft will be created that incorporates all materials to form a more coherent document. The WDS-SC was requested to assist with topics having descriptions that are currently deficient. Many of the topics are inspired by the online Research Data Management course run by Data Archiving and Networked Services, and the course will be re-examined to see if there is additional text that might help with this.
- There will be an effort to ensure that the Membership Maturity document aligns with the topics proposed in the training curriculum. The document implies that there is guidance to assist WDS Members with improving their practices, and it should match up with the scope of what is being envisaged in the developed curriculum.

Membership Management Update
- The reviews have been completed for Neotoma Paleoecological Database's application for WDS Regular membership. The WDS-SC decided to ask the organization to address the points raised by the reviewers before considering whether to approve it as a Regular Member.