

World Data System Scientific Committee (WDS-SC) 2015–2018 Teleconference #9

Teleconference #9 was held on Wednesday, 06 July 2016 at 13:00 UTC

Summary:

Review of Action items

- Preparations have been started for two Webinars on the Common Requirements. Organizations with outstanding applications were recently sent a warning about the transition to the Common Requirements; all WDS Regular and Network Members will also be sent additional information about them soon.
- A first draft of the Activity Report template has been completed and is currently being circulated within the Review and Accreditation Subcommittee for feedback.
- The Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research and the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) have both agreed to be involved in the Knowledge Network (KN) Working Group (WG). GBIF raised some valid questions about the KN, which have now been addressed, and GBIF is considering how it might become a more active partner in supplying some of the required infrastructure.
- The WDS International Programme Office (WDS-IPO) will organize a call to strategically identify individuals from the Health Sciences to join the KN-WG and to provide input for several other items, so they can be approached.
- The WDS-IPO organized a meeting between OpenAIRE and representatives of the NASA Distributed Active Archive Centres to look into technical details of connecting the latter to the WDS Metadata Catalogue. A further meeting with OpenAIRE will be arranged to talk about exact implementation steps so that ICSU-WDS can start defining its work plan. ICSU-WDS will also look to secure a Memorandum of Understanding with OpenAIRE to ensure that the collaborative effort goes smoothly.
- The Data Ecology Document has yet to be discussed with the Secretary General of the Research Data Alliance. The Chair again asked SC members to send ideas of how to progress with the document.
- The WDS-SC needs to review the modified Bylaws before they are taken to WDS Members. This will be added to the Agenda of the next Teleconference.

WDS International Technology Office (WDS-ITO)

- The deadline for feedback on the concept note is closed, and the inputs received will be consolidated and the note finalized by the end of July.
- The language in the note does not use the political terms that are currently considered exciting, and should be adapted to ensure it resonates with organizations' priorities.
- The final version of the note will contain a set of annexes giving more information on governance functions, human resource requirements, and so on. Details are being compiled, and the WDS-IPO will assist with this.

Ad Hoc Subcommittee on New Membership: First Round of Recruitments + 16th WDS-SC Meeting

- Informal exchanges have been made with the directors of three large data services in West Africa to gain an idea of their interest in becoming WDS Members. Those contacted are really attracted by what ICSU-WDS is doing, and are aware of the issue of having certified data. The next step is to send out formal emails, using the template developed by the Subcommittee for first contact, and see how things progress. The WDS-IPO will be informed once the contacts have been made to then follow up.
- Informal contact has also been made with a number of Brazilian institutions. All of the ones spoken to have welcomed the idea of joining ICSU-WDS. More formal introductions will now be sent. The WDS-IPO will send flyers to assist in this recruitment drive, and will also produce written invitation letters where needed.
- Initial discussions have taken place about holding the 16th WDS-SC Meeting at the Institut de recherche pour le développement (IRD) in France. Hosting this event is important to IRD since it has a new Department on Data and e-Infrastructure, and ICSU-WDS aligns with its mission. IRD has many connections with African Institutions at which data are generated, but most of them are not certified or included within larger repositories; and hence the message that ICSU-WDS promotes is very useful for IRD.
- The idea is to have two days after the WDS-SC Meeting to convene all of IRD's African/South American/Asian partners that have an observatory/database for an exchange with ICSU-WDS on certification and so on. A side-event has also been suggested at which to have discussions with other ICSU bodies.

WDS Training

a. Workshop in China

- The WDS-IPO proposed a number of modules based on the Common Requirements—split between early career researchers (ECRs) and high-level experts—that could be the basis for a WDS training curriculum. ICSU-WDS can build on the guidance in the Catalogue of Common Requirements by mapping the modules to already available resources provided by WDS Members or other organizations.
- The WDS-SC felt that the distinction between researchers and data intermediaries/experts was incorrect, with many of the modules for the former being things the latter should worry about. The emphasis for researchers should be on research data management throughout the entire data lifecycle.
- The audience of the Workshop will be ECRs related to disaster management, and so the course should be quite basic and give general knowledge about data science and stewardship. A decision is needed in the longer term as to whether data intermediaries are WDS' primary audience or if it extends to researchers; ICSU-WDS cannot address everything.
- The WDS-SC was asked to send comments on the proposal to the WDS-IPO in order to flesh out the document. What might be appropriate for the upcoming Workshop will also be thought about such that the two sets of ideas can be merged.

b. ICSU Grant

- A possibility is to link an ICSU Grant proposal to WDS training. Instructing multi- and trans-disciplinary scientists on how to work across the Sciences is needed in Future Earth and other large initiatives. ICSU-WDS could play a critical role if its training is directed at research science questions. However, Grant proposals must come from ICSU Scientific Unions, and therefore those developing proposals with a training component that ICSU-WDS can provide must be found.
- SC members with contacts in Unions were asked to investigate what proposals are currently being developed for the ICSU Grant. The WDS-SC will then have a round-table discussion about whether something is going forward that ICSU-WDS can contribute to.

Committee on Data for Science and Technology (CODATA) Task Groups (TGs)

- The notion of forming a Citizen Science TG evolved from interactions with Open Street Map (OSM) through the CODATA TG on 'Global Roads Data Development' that were then extended to answer questions about the validity of OSM data. It is of personal interest to several members of the current WDS-SC, and the previous WDS-SC discussed something similar after a good session on citizen science at SciDataCon 2014. Depending on ICSU-WDS' level of involvement, it may be proposed as a joint TG, and precedents have been set for this.
- One concern is that issues around data curation and validation are not seen as fashionable, and it is not easy to bridge the gap between the hot topic of citizen science and thinking about how one gets valid data that are useful for the scientific community. It is different for different groups though, and involving scientists working on the psychology of citizen science may bring it more into the realm of 'popular science'.
- The WDS-SC has been requested to review a White Paper by the CODATA TG on 'Linked Open Data for Global Disaster Risk Research'. The WDS-IPO will send the document to WDS Members as part of the next WDS Newsletter and will ask those interested to review it.

SciDataCon 2016

- The WDS-SC was asked to think about keynotes for SciDataCon 2016 and to send suggestions to the WDS-IPO.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Activities

- The WDS-IPO received an invitation through ICSU to nominate experts to participate in an IPCC special report on climate change and oceans and the cryosphere. The WDS-IPO forwarded the invitation to WDS Members with an interest in these areas. SC members with nominations in mind were asked to submit them to the WDS-IPO so that they can be channelled to ICSU. Moreover, they were asked to report on any known involvement in IPCC activities, since ICSU would like to map WDS-related actions.
- Future Earth is organizing a Workshop on IPCC in Finland in late August. The WDS-IPO circulated this information to relevant WDS Members and SC members. Many WDS Members are interested and are planning to nominate someone to participate in the Workshop.

Membership Management Update

- The WDS-SC agreed with the reviewers' feedback on GBIF's application for WDS Regular membership. The WDS-IPO will ask GBIF to address the points raised before the application is considered for approval.