Summary

Review of Action Items

- The WDS International Programme Office (WDS-IPO) contacted the Executive Director of the International Oceanographic Commission about WDS involvement in the United Nations Decade of the Ocean. It will be discussed at the 25th Session of the International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange Committee (18–22 February 2019; Tokyo, Japan).
- The WDS-IPO contacted the Centre for Environmental Data Analysis about submitting a proposal for a poster on the data requirements for the Coupled Model Intercomparison Project Phase 6 (CMIP6) to the CMIP6 Model Analysis Workshop (25–28 March 2019; Barcelona, Spain). WDS has been added to that proposal. The WDS-SC Chair will be at the Workshop wearing a different hat, but will represent WDS at the same time.
- The WDS Early Career Researcher (ECR) Network Co-chairs will have a telecon in January with the Leading Integrated Research for Agenda 2030 in Africa programme.

One-pager & Strategic Plan

One-pager

- The one-pager is a document that highlights what WDS stands for, how it fits into the data landscape, and the WDS-SC’s thinking for moving forward. The WDS-SC was asked to approve the current version such that it could be printed and circulated. Several revisions were requested by the WDS-SC.
- The one-pager will be revised at a later stage to include more of the language from the International Science Council (ISC) new strategy. As ISC defines its foci, the one-pager will be modified to show how WDS is addressing those challenges.
- Once the document is finalized, it will be sent out to interested parties: the ISC Board, WDS Members, Scientific Unions, and other organizations.

Strategic Plan

- It was suggested by one SC member that the Strategic Plan is too long, it contains a lot of information and should be reformulated as a why statement, and then the primary WDS action items. Therefore the WDS-SC was asked for feedback on whether the Plan needed to be shorten further now, or left as something for the future.
- There will be a delay in putting up the Plan if a shorter one is developed. The WDS-SC thus decided to stick with the current content. An alternative, shorter version for the WDS-SC to consider will be provided at the next face-to-face Meeting.

Response to ISC

- The WDS-IPO consolidated the comments the WDS-SC had made on the ISC Governing Board’s Communiqué and Strategic Challenge Domains document to turn them into concrete feedback for the Board. The topics were to be narrowed down to 4–5 crucial key points stressing what WDS is doing—and will continue to do—for the challenges as part its agenda and in collaboration with partners.
- Under the thematic framework, WDS could contribute to any of the challenges (all are data dependent), but the two WDS are most closely aligned with are the Digital Revolution and the Evolution of Science. WDS has already made significant contributions to the Digital Revolution and worked with all of the major players, but the issue of the Evolution of Science depends hugely on having open and free access to data and data services, and on the existence of infrastructure.
- One of the main messages is the overemphasis on ‘data’ and their importance, which needs to be explained in the wider context in terms of the infrastructure underpinning the data. A discussion is needed, pointing to the gap left in the scientific data record when (for example) governments want to withdraw support for data repositories or infrastructure. The creation of the WDS International Technology Office (WDS-ITO) is an example of WDS’ commitment to global research data infrastructure, and thus WDS is in a position to make the argument of promoting infrastructure as something independent of scientific research.

Data at Risk
• A document was presented to the WDS-SC that will form the basis of a dialogue with the Scientific Unions (and possibly the National Academies), with the aim of identifying where digital information is being generated, and trying to get that digital information onto a pathway that will lead it to trustworthy repositories. There is a long-tail of science in which people generate data that typically disappear after the project comes to an end. Such primary data sources are in an ‘at risk’ category, and could potentially open up a large area of activity for WDS. However, the WDS-SC needs to consider whether this cause is within the WDS remit.

• While repositories at risk and databases having no logical home are really important and something WDS is interested in, concerns were raised at the 21st WDS-SC Meeting that taking on this challenge is not really serving the WDS membership. The WDS-SC therefore must clarify how much time and effort should be committed to it.

• WDS has been very successful in addressing the needs of candidate repositories and transforming them into sources of trustworthy data/services, and can potentially move on to thinking about this new area. There is still much work to do on certification and trustworthiness of repositories at a global level. A first step therefore might be to perform a scoping exercise to examine the status of existing activities and what they have produced such that the WDS-SC can get a sense of what WDS can do. In addition, it would be valuable to find out the degree of interest WDS Members have in actions surrounding data at risk.

• A concrete plan is needed of the steps that WDS can take, a road map of recommendations before WDS commits to taking particular actions. The WDS-SC must think about what issues are relevant to WDS Members, and drafting policies that would link up repositories and these data at risk would be well within its mandate.

• Two letters will be prepared: one contacting data organizations to find out what their interest is in this area and what they are doing, and a second one to WDS Members to find out what they think about and do with these types of datasets.

• WDS hopes to find contacts within the Scientific Unions interested in data and to whom the one-pager could be sent. A draft document will be created that can be sent to the Scientific Unions (and to the National Academies) asking them for feedback on contacts.

WDS-ITO Update

• The WDS-ITO Associate Director will represent WDS at the National Data Services Framework Summit on 23–25 January 2019 in Ottawa, Canada. There will also be a pre-meeting concerning a train-the-trainer programme.

• There are functionalities missing from the SciDataCon conference system, and the WDS-ITO might be able to assist in this. A conversation will thus be setup with the developers to discuss this.

• The WDS-ITO started talks with Google Dataset Search at International Data Week 2018 about how they are linking to repositories. Project 418 of EarthCube shows how repository holdings can be made accessible through Google Dataset Search using SCHEMA.org and other mechanisms to tag the data so that they show up in a search. This could be useful to make the data from the WDS community more visible. However, only some tagged datasets tagged are showing up in the search. Not only should WDS Members’ data be discoverable through Google Dataset Search, but they should also somehow be flagged if possible as coming from a certified repository.

WDS Applications Update

• The WDS-SC reaccredited the WDS Regular memberships of the Australian Antarctic Data Centre, WDC - Earth Resources Observation and Science, DataFirst, and WDC for Climate.

• It also approved the WDS Regular membership of the Digital Repository of Ireland. The Norwegian Marine Data Centre will be approved one it includes some additional information.

Any Other Business

• The 21st WDS-SC Meeting is to be co-located with the ECR training course. The course will last two-and-a-half days and the WDS-SC Meeting a further two days.